



for every child



# Global Framework on Transferable Skills

November 2019

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# Abbreviations and Acronyms

<b>3EA</b>	Education in Emergencies Evidence for Action
<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
<b>C4D</b>	Communication for Development
<b>CASEL</b>	Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning
<b>CBO</b>	Community-Based Organization
<b>CCCI2</b>	Civic Competence Composite Indicators 2
<b>CPF</b>	Conceptual and Programmatic Framework
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organization
<b>ECE</b>	Early Childhood Education
<b>FRESH</b>	Focusing Resources on Effective School Health Partnership (UNESCO)
<b>GPE</b>	Global Partnership for Education
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>IASC-MHPSS</b>	Inter-Agency Standing Committee on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
<b>ICCS</b>	International Civic and Citizenship Education Study
<b>ICFGE</b>	International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity
<b>ICT</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>INEE</b>	Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies
<b>ISCED</b>	International Standard Classification of Education
<b>ITU</b>	International Telecommunication Union
<b>IYF</b>	International Youth Foundation
<b>LMS</b>	Learning Management System
<b>LSCE</b>	Life Skills and Citizenship Education
<b>LSE</b>	Life Skills Education
<b>M&amp;E</b>	Monitoring and Evaluation
<b>MENA</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>MEHE</b>	Ministry of Education and Higher Education

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<b>MHPSS</b>	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
<b>MOEHE</b>	Ministry of Education and Higher Education
<b>MoA</b>	Ministry of Agriculture
<b>MoL</b>	Ministry of Labour
<b>MoSA</b>	Ministry of Social Affairs
<b>NEET</b>	Not in Education, Employment or Training
<b>NESP</b>	National Education Sector Plans
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization
<b>NVTC</b>	National Vocational Training Centre
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development
<b>PISA</b>	Programme for International Student Assessment (OECD)
<b>RORE</b>	Rates of Return to Education
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>SEA-PLM</b>	Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metric
<b>SEL</b>	Social and Emotional Learning
<b>STEM</b>	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
<b>TIMSS</b>	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
<b>TVET</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>UIS</b>	UNESCO Institute of Statistics
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNGEI</b>	United Nations Girls' Education Initiative
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations Refugee Agency
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UNRWA</b>	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for Development
<b>USD</b>	United States Dollar
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization
<b>xLOB</b>	Experiential Learning Objects



# Executive Summary

Children and adolescents today live in a world of challenges and opportunities, including new technologies, changing labour markets, migration, conflict, and environmental and political changes. To succeed within this current and future environment, all children and adolescents need access to quality education and learning that develops skills, knowledge, attitudes and values and enables them to **become successful life-long learners who can learn, un-learn, and relearn; find and retain productive work; make wise decisions; and positively engage in their communities.**

However, many children and adolescents remain out of school or do not have access to quality learning opportunities. Furthermore, education and learning systems worldwide are constrained in delivering positive outcomes for children and adolescents and remain mostly focused on the acquisition of knowledge that is not sufficient to prepare them to meet challenges and seize opportunities now and in the future.

- By 2030, an estimated 825 million children are expected to leave school without basic secondary level skills.<sup>1</sup>
- 39% of employers in nine diverse countries (including high income countries) claim that a leading reason for entry-level vacancies in diverse economies is due in part to a skills shortage.<sup>2</sup>
- Across the globe, about 500 million youth are unemployed, underemployed or working insecure jobs, often in the informal sector,<sup>3<sup>4</sup>5</sup> and 255 million (21%) youth in the developing world—three quarters of them women—are not in employment, education or training (NEET).<sup>6<sup>7</sup>8</sup>
- Over 33% of students between the ages of 13 and 15 experience bullying from their peers.<sup>9</sup>

**As such, there is an urgent need to expand, rethink and transform education and learning systems to provide all children and adolescents, especially those who are marginalised and in conflict and emergency settings, with quality learning opportunities that include the skills they need to succeed in school, work, and life.**

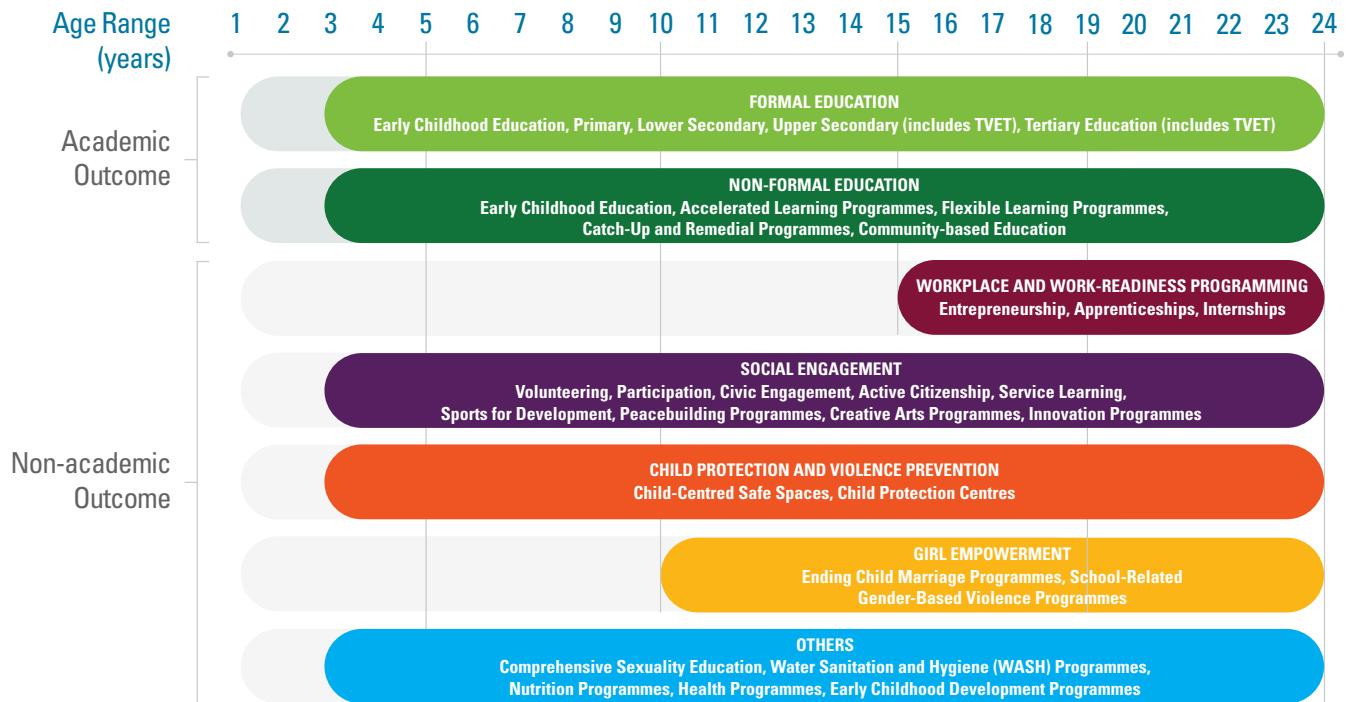
**Transferable skills**, also known as **life skills, 21st century skills, soft skills, or socio-emotional skills<sup>10</sup>** are the focus of this Framework. They allow children and adolescents to become agile, adaptive learners and citizens equipped to navigate personal, academic, social and economic challenges. Transferable skills also support crisis-affected children to cope with trauma and build resilience in the face of adversity. Transferable skills include problem solving, negotiation, managing emotions, empathy and communication, among others and they work alongside knowledge and values to connect, reinforce, and develop other skills and build further knowledge. Within this construct, they are the **central ‘magic glue,’ connecting, reinforcing, and developing other skills (foundational skills of literacy and numeracy, digital skills and job-specific skills<sup>11</sup>).**

However, despite significant global efforts, transferable skills are not developed progressively or at scale for all children and adolescents, whether in or out of school. Most governments have ambitious whole-sector policies and plans in place to develop these skills, often guided by a national vision for economic and social development, but

implementation remains a challenge. Out of 152 surveyed countries, 117 include transferable skills within national policy documents, and 71 include transferable skills within curriculum, but only 18 define the learning standards to ensure the development of these skills across different age/grade levels.<sup>12</sup>

Within this context, The Global Framework on Transferable Skills supports UNICEF country offices, policymakers, programmers, and educators to embed transferable skills within different education and learning systems, resulting in the systematic development of a breadth of transferable skills, at scale, across the life course and through multiple learning pathways: formal, non-formal and community based. To do this, the Framework articulates:

- **a set of 10 key principles** to guide work around transferable skills development; these principles include the need to be holistic, human-rights based, gender-responsive, child and youth participatory, inclusive, innovative, responsive to context, and evidence based among others.
- **a higher order theory of change** that defines the contribution that transferable skills development makes to education and learning systems by enhancing outcomes related to lifelong learning, employment and entrepreneurship, personal empowerment, and active citizenship.
- **programmatic options to operationalise the higher order theory of change** based on a **multiple pathways approach** to education and training, which assumes that skills development can take place at different times, in various settings and contexts, and through various providers as can be seen in the figure below. The approach **promotes equity and inclusiveness** by offering more opportunities to reconcile social norms and expectations, home duties, work, and learning prospects.



Within these pathways, **there is no silver bullet solution to improve the development of transferable skills**, and action must be prioritised based on a solid situational analysis that considers the context and capacity of education and learning system. Along with **evidence, examples, best practices, programmatic options and entry points**, the Framework proposes **three intervention areas for action**:

- **Teaching and Learning:** Effective skills development includes careful selection and alignment of curriculum and content, appropriate pedagogical practices, and authentic and continuous assessment of learner skills. Entry points within this area include developing and implementing
  - different types of curriculum and content for all education levels and learners through formal and non-formal education;
  - pre-service and in-service professional development programmes to develop teacher/facilitator/trainer active pedagogical practices; and
  - formative and summative assessment approaches to measure skills development.
- **Enabling Environments:** Effective transferable skills development requires learning environments where all learners can participate, and feel physically, socially and emotionally safe, and where skills can be reinforced through positive interactions with adults and other peers. Entry points within this area include promoting
  - good governance and accountability mechanisms in schools, including community engagement and parent and child participation in school-based management;
  - teacher wellbeing measures, including professional development programmes to develop the transferable skills of teachers and facilitators;
  - transferable skills components within C4D strategies and frameworks;
  - safe and supportive physical and digital school and learning environments;
  - positive discipline policies, strategies and programmes which fully prohibit corporal punishment and other forms of violence; and
  - psychosocial support mechanisms to support children and youth in non-formal development and humanitarian settings.
- **Systems Strengthening:** To achieve scale and sustainability, skills development must be addressed throughout upstream components of education and learning systems and multiple pathways. Entry points within this area include:
  - embedding skills components in upstream work such as education sector analysis and planning as well as policy and strategy development;
  - embedding skills development activities within budgeting processes;

- o developing and implementing effective coordination and partnerships between government, donors, civil society and the private sector;
- o embedding skills components within human resource strategies, frameworks, and standards; and
- o developing and strengthening skills assessment frameworks to measure the outputs, outcomes, and impacts of skills development programming.

Realizing the vision set forth in this Framework will require resources, partnership and coordination, and continuous learning based on data and evidence.

As such, UNICEF is engaging with governments and other stakeholders (private sector, civil society, academia, donors, and other development agencies) to advance in the rapidly evolving area of transferable skills development and to ensure that all children and adolescents are equipped with the **skills they need for success in school, work and life.**



# Preamble

This Framework, developed to support UNICEF in delivering on the results of its Strategic Plan 2018–2021 and ‘Every Child Learns’ UNICEF Education Strategy (2019–2030), provides a shared vision of work on the topic of skills development across UNICEF. As a global public good document, it can also be used by governments and other stakeholders working to promote quality education. It is a living document that will be periodically updated.

It assumes a vision of quality education and learning for children and adolescents grounded in human rights values that builds and develops skills and knowledge to contribute to holistic individual, social, and economic development. While skills development in this Framework is considered a component of national education and training systems, skills development essentially happens wherever learning occurs and has impacts far beyond formal education settings.

The Framework is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 4 to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Concurrently, skills development also contributes to the fulfilment of others SDGs relating to poverty eradication (SDG 1), ending hunger and improved nutrition (SDG 2), promoting healthy lives (SDG 3), achieving gender equality and empowerment for all women and girls (SDG 5), improving water, sanitation, and hygiene outcomes (SDG 6), promotion of full and productive employment and decent work for all (SDG 8), promoting innovation (SDG 9), reducing inequalities (SDG 10), and ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns (SDG 12) among others.

The Framework builds on and expands the scope of *Reimagining Life Skills and Citizenship Education in the Middle East and North Africa: A Four-Dimensional and Systems Approach to 21st Century Skills and the MENA Conceptual and Programmatic Framework* (MENA-CPF). The MENA-CPF was developed within the Life Skills and Citizenship Education (LSCE) initiative, a multi-agency partnership that brings together different actors at country, regional and global levels along with ministries of education and other national institutions responsible for education across the MENA countries.



# 1. The Role of Skills in a Changing World

## Quality learning: a global challenge

Children and adolescents today live in a world of challenges and opportunities, including new technologies, changing labour markets, migration, conflict, and environmental and political changes. To succeed within the current and future environment, all children and adolescents need access to quality education and learning that develops skills, knowledge, attitudes and values and enables them to become **successful life-long learners who can learn, unlearn, and relearn; find productive work; make wise decisions; and actively engage in their communities.**

However, many children and adolescents remain out of school or do not have access to quality learning opportunities. Furthermore, education and learning systems worldwide are constrained in delivering positive outcomes for children and adolescents and remain mostly focused on the acquisition of knowledge that is not sufficient to prepare them to meet challenges and seize opportunities now and in the future.

**As such, there is an urgent need to expand, rethink and transform education and learning systems to provide all children and adolescents, especially those who are marginalised and in conflict and emergency settings, with quality learning opportunities that include the skills they need to succeed in school, work, and life.**

## Transferable skills: the glue of all skills

The Framework identifies four main categories of skills needed by children and adolescents for success in school, life, and work (see Figure 1). These categories have been identified based on a review of national, regional and global frameworks and include the following:

- **foundational skills**, namely **literacy and numeracy**, are essential and are the foundation for

further learning, productive employment and civic engagement;

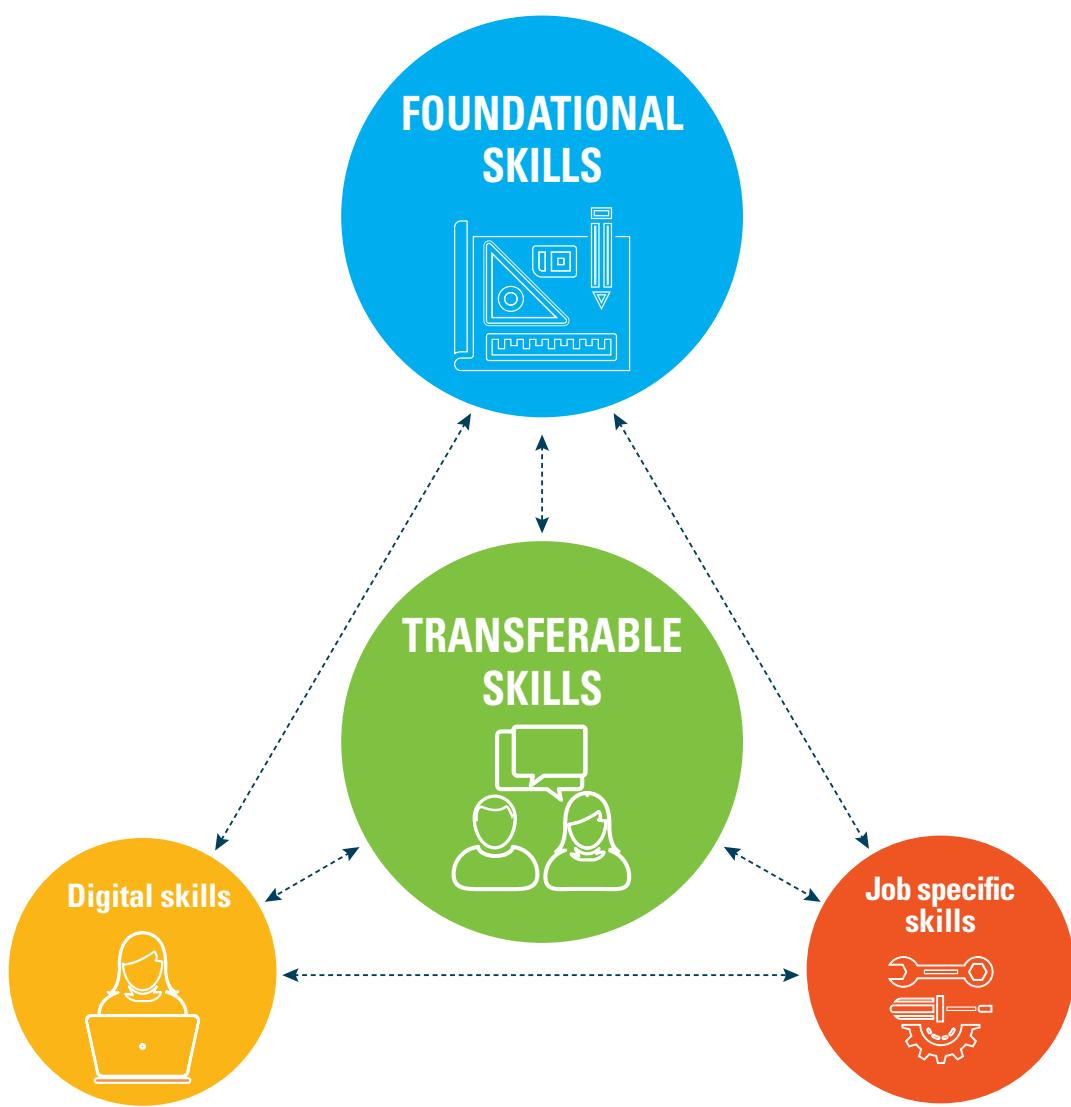
- **transferable skills**, also known as **life skills, 21st century skills, soft skills, or socio-emotional skills**<sup>13</sup> allow young people to become agile, adaptive learners and citizens equipped to navigate personal, academic, social, and economic challenges; transferable skills include problem solving, negotiation, managing emotions, empathy, and communication and support crisis-affected young people to cope with trauma and build resilience in the face of adversity; transferable skills work alongside knowledge and values to connect, reinforce, and develop other skills and build further knowledge;
- **digital skills** and knowledge support the development of digitally literate children and adolescents who can use and understand technology, search for and manage information, communicate, collaborate, create and share content, build knowledge, and solve problems safely, critically and ethically in a way that is appropriate for their age, local language and local culture;
- **job-specific skills**, also known as **technical and vocational skills**, are associated with one or more occupations, such as carpentry, accounting, or engineering and support the transition of older adolescents into the workforce.

Transferable skills are the focus of this Framework because of their 'bridging' and supportive function. In connection with foundational skills, they provide the base for the acquisition of other sets of skills. Transferable skills do not operate in isolation. Instead, they function in the acquisition of other sets of skills. In Figure 1, transferable skills can be seen as the **central 'magic glue'** connecting, reinforcing, and developing digital, job-specific and foundational skills along with knowledge, attitudes, and values. In other words, the dynamic and connecting role of transferable skills in all skill development plays an essential role in realizing

a vision of a quality education and learning. This is especially the case in crisis-affected contexts where transferable skills enable children and youth to learn more readily and participate more fully in educational opportunities. The harmful effects of trauma and adverse experiences on young people's potential for learning is mitigated by transferable skills.

Evidence highlights the malleability of transferable skills which develop over time through age appropriate interventions. While further research is needed into the contextual factors that impact emotional and social health, it is widely accepted that transferable skills often require deliberate practice starting in early childhood and are acquired throughout life.

**Figure 1** Skills needed for success in school, work and life



## The key role of transferable skills

The development of transferable skills helps to bring about mutually reinforcing, personal, social and economic benefits<sup>14 15</sup> and supports all child and adolescent lifelong success in school, work and life.

### Transferable skills to support lifelong learning

By 2030, an estimated 825 million children are expected to leave school without basic secondary level skills.<sup>16</sup>

Transferable skills contribute to children and adolescents mastering the instruments and processes to develop knowledge, acquire information and fundamental basic skills, and apply this information<sup>17 18</sup> adolescent, skills-based quality learning can help to achieve a knowledge society through improved learning outcomes. The development of transferable skills has also shown positive impacts on learning and academic outcomes.<sup>19</sup>

Putting transferable skills at the core of quality education and learning ensures equity in the quality of learning and learning outcomes so that all children and adolescents can succeed as lifelong learners. Equipped with advanced critical thinking capabilities and social and emotional abilities, learners can independently weigh in on the content of the information they receive and identify solutions to problems.<sup>20 21 22</sup> Furthermore, critical, curious and innovative thinkers can develop positive attitudes and be ready to engage in their work and communities.<sup>23 24</sup>

### Transferable skills to support a changing workforce

The development of transferable skills is essential in today's rapidly changing labour market. **Across the globe, about 500 million youth are unemployed, underemployed or working insecure jobs, often in the informal sector.**<sup>25 26 27</sup> **255 million (21%) of youth in the developing world, three quarters of them women, are not in employment, education or training (NEET).**<sup>28 29 30 31</sup> Because of gender and social norms and discriminating practices, labour force

participation of young women and of adolescents and youth with disabilities is also constrained.<sup>32 33 34</sup>

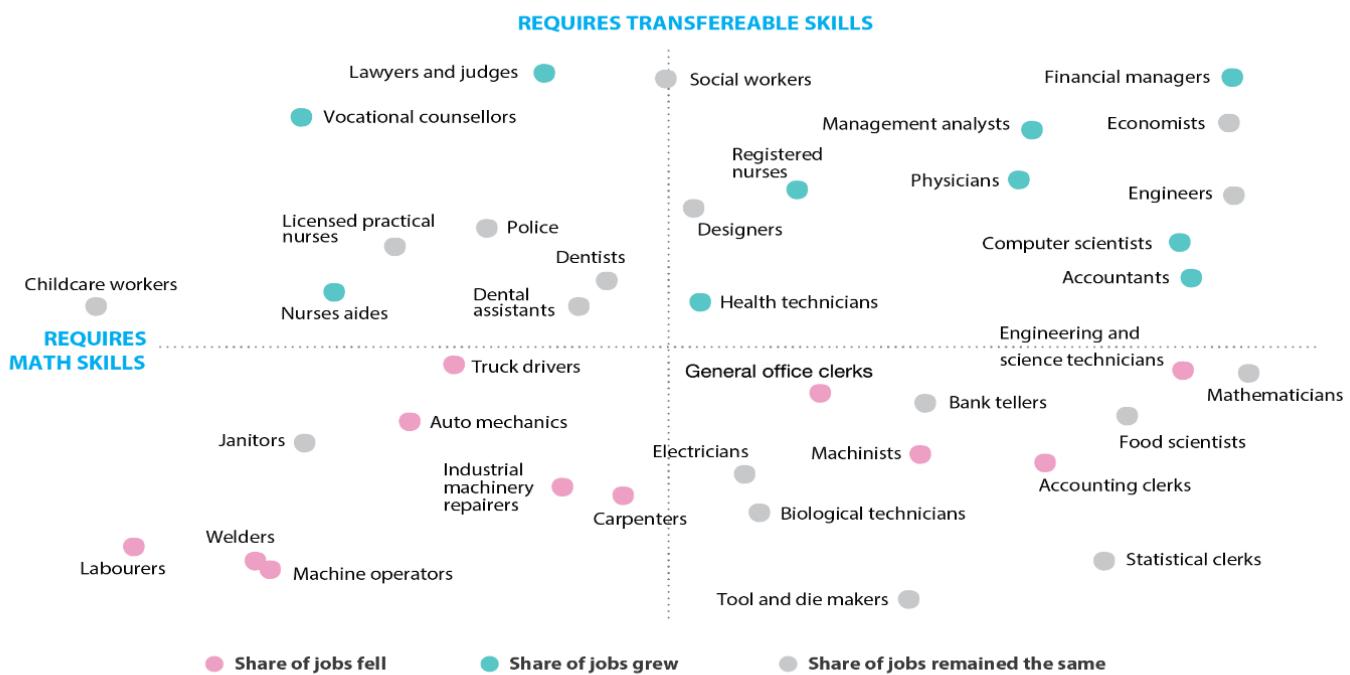
Rapidly changing job requirements combined with limited job growth have also eroded job security in many countries. **Low-skill workers are growing in number, while job-market demands for workers with transferable skills, ICT skills and mastery of new technologies remain unmet.**<sup>35 36 37 38</sup> The share of jobs globally requiring these skills has been rapidly growing as automation and technology replaces manual and mechanical jobs (see Figure 2).

To address the skills mismatch contributing to high youth unemployment,<sup>39 40 41</sup> learning for the changing world of work needs to consider the fast pace of change and new skills and knowledge requirements.<sup>42 43 44</sup>

Transferable skills enable children and adolescents to navigate and meet the evolving demands of the labour market and entrepreneurship<sup>45</sup>, be independent, creative, learners and critical thinkers<sup>46</sup>, remain agile, flexible and adaptive,<sup>47 48 49</sup> master complex problems, and connect with others in highly collaborative settings. Children and adolescents, especially young women, are better prepared to design, enter, and adapt their own pathway in the world of work. They are also more able to understand hurdles and risks on a personal level and in relation to others, such as co-workers, management, clients or customers.<sup>50</sup>

### Transferable skills to support personal empowerment and community engagement

Transferable skills are at the core of the personal development of each child and adolescent. Quality education and learning focusing on these skills fosters empowered and more resilient children and adolescents, especially those marginalised, by supporting self-protection, violence prevention and gender empowerment. Quality learning fostering transferable skills supports children and adolescents to learn and practice asserting their choices and communicate these choices to family and community members.

**Figure 2** Jobs requiring transferable skills<sup>51</sup>

Children and adolescents versed in transferable skills can better understand and exercise their rights and obligations in civic life. By being able to cooperate with others and pro-actively advance their community interests, they find their voice and develop into active citizens that are able to engage on local, regional, and global issues that affect their lives (such as climate change, changing labour markets, migration, gender-based discrimination and violence, etc.). As steadfast and self-aware learners, they can champion human rights and gender equality and drive their communities towards more peaceful existence and social cohesion.<sup>52 53 54</sup>

Developing transferable skills can contribute to countering social and gender norms that reinforce inequalities and harmful practices that especially affect children. Transferable skills play a major part in

enabling children to make constructive and positive life choices and avoid risks linked to unhealthy behaviours that threaten their health and well-being, such as the risk of violence, early marriage, unintended pregnancy, HIV and other sexually transmitted infections or drug use.<sup>55 56 57</sup>

Considering that approximately 33% of students between the ages of 13 and 15 experience bullying from their peers, the development of transferable skills is also crucial for reducing violence in schools and communities, especially violence against girls, children with disabilities, and other marginalised children and adolescents.<sup>58 59 60 61 62</sup> Transferable skills support children and adolescents to cope with and manage risks and challenges of violence and the conditions that lead up to it in a positive and productive manner.



## Transferable skills to cope with trauma and build resilience

Over 31 million children have been forcibly displaced, including some 13 million child refugees (UNICEF Data, 2018). The negative impact of armed conflict, natural disasters, health epidemics, pervasive violence, and political and economic crises on the physical and psychosocial wellbeing of children and youth has been well documented. While some stress in life is normal and even necessary for children and youth to develop healthy coping mechanisms and problem-solving skills, the type of stress experienced in crisis contexts surpasses what is healthy for child development and wellbeing. Neuroscience research shows that children who experience prolonged severe adversity can develop a ‘toxic stress’ response that negatively impacts their brain development.<sup>63</sup> This can have both a short and long-term impact on their physical and mental health, behaviour and ability to learn.<sup>64</sup>

However, evidence also shows that these effects can be reduced or reversed by having access to safe and predictable environments, supportive, nurturing care, and quality educational opportunities that include skills development. Transferable skills play a crucial role in developing protective factors in children and youth by fostering the intrapersonal and interpersonal skills necessary for managing emotions and building healthy relationships.<sup>65</sup> By socially and emotionally engaging with others in a healthy way, children and youth are more readily able to make meaning out of the adversity they experience and to restore purpose and hope.<sup>66</sup> Transferable skill building also helps prevent aggressive and conflict inducing behaviour later in life<sup>67</sup> and is essential to any post-crisis reconciliation, social cohesion and longstanding peace.<sup>68 69</sup> Crucially, transferable skills support crisis-affected young people to cope with trauma and build resilience, which supports them to heal and be ready to learn.

## Transferable skills to transform learning systems

Despite significant global efforts, transferable skills are not developed progressively or at scale for all children and adolescents, whether in or out of school. Most governments have ambitious whole-sector policies and plans in place to develop these skills, often guided by a national vision for economic and social development, but implementation remains a challenge. Out of 152 surveyed countries, 117 include transferable skills within national policy documents and 71 within curriculum, but only 18 define the learning standards and/or learning progressions to ensure the development of those skills across different age/grade levels.<sup>70</sup>

Even within the mostly high-income countries surveyed, there are many challenges in **aligning curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment** across the skills development process.<sup>71</sup>

Persistent challenges in skills development remain, including:

- **different terminologies, taxonomies, and frameworks** to inform transferable skills development, leading to conceptual confusion among policymakers and implementors;
- **a lack of research on skill progression and interaction** across the life course throughout age/development stages, creating obstacles to embedding transferable skills in curricula, pedagogy, and assessment;
- **a lack of evidence-based approaches to skills development programming in low-resource and low- capacity settings**, including development and humanitarian settings; this is closely related to the **difficulty and high cost of measuring skills development learning outcomes** discussed in the next chapter;

- **weak system-wide coordinated approaches** to provide coherent and harmonized opportunities for skills development for all children and adolescents, leading to unsustainable and dispersed approaches with limited impact.

Addressing these challenges requires coordinated and systemic efforts to work through multiple learning

pathways and across all levels of education and learning systems to align curriculum, pedagogy and assessment approaches and to promote enabling environments conducive to the development of transferable skills. It also requires more research and evidence building to solve some of the technical challenges related to measuring transferable skills and to promote the understanding that they progress across the life course.





# 2. The Global Framework on Transferable Skills

## A skills and human rights-based vision of quality learning

### Purpose and background

The Global Framework on Transferable Skills supports UNICEF country offices, policymakers, programmers, and educators to embed transferable skills within different education and learning systems, resulting **in the systematic development of a breadth of transferable skills, at scale, across the life course and through multiple learning pathways: formal, non-formal and community based.** The Framework articulates:

- **a working definition of transferable skills;**
- **a set of key principles** to guide work around transferable skills development;
- **a higher-order theory of change and outcomes** that define the contribution of transferable skills development within education and learning systems; and
- programmatic approaches to **operationalizing the development of transferable skills.**

Because skills development takes place in varied contexts using varied approaches, this Framework suggests principles and approaches that allow policy makers and educators to identify skills and programming options for skills development according to their context rather

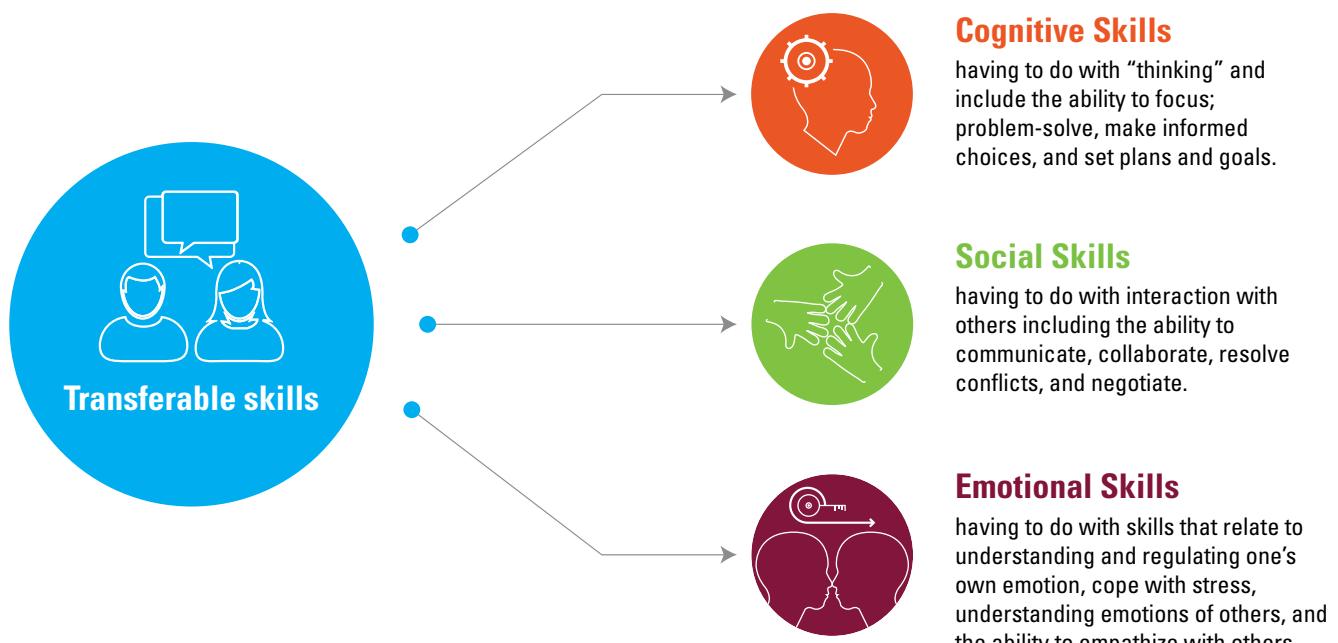
than naming a specific set of ‘one size fits all’ skills or programming approaches.

The Framework is not meant to provide specific technical guidance for transferable skills development (such as the development of competency-based curricula, learner-centred pedagogies or skills assessments). Instead, it constitutes a reference document for developing further guidance on transferable skills development across sectors and programmes, for example, through Early Childhood Development or child protection programmes, or through supporting transitions from school to work or adolescent participation and civic engagement.

### Working definition of transferable skills

Building on the four categories of skills identified in the previous section (foundational skills, digital skills, transferable skills and job specific skills), the Framework proposes a working definition of transferable skills composed of three main interrelated categories of skills (see Figure 3).

The three types of transferable skills are important for policymakers and implementers to consider in programming and operationalization.

**Figure 3** A working definition of transferable skills

## Key principles of transferable skills development

The Framework proposes adhering to the following principles to develop transferable skills for all children and adolescents. Transferable skills should be:

- **holistic**, with a breadth of essential and interrelated cognitive, social, and emotional skills needed for children and adolescents to learn effectively, be successful in the world of work, be empowered, and fulfil their civic responsibilities;
- **understood within the life-long learning cycle** as a dynamic, progressive, and cumulative process from early childhood through adolescence to adulthood;
- **human rights-based**, promoting human rights values for all learners;

- **gender-responsive**, aware of gender norms, roles and relations, and promote measures and approaches to actively reduce their harmful effects, including gender inequality;
- **inclusive**, accessible and contextualized to all learners regardless of ability, ethnicity, linguistic, social, or economic status, including refugees, migrants, and conflict-affected children and youth;
- **relevant**, aligning both with national priorities, the labour market, and the needs of adolescents and communities while considering local culture and context;
- **evidence-based**, using how children and adolescents learn and grow, lessons drawn from previous interventions about what works, and through robust monitoring and evaluation, generating evidence to contribute to advancing the field;

- **child and young people participation**, building their capacity for meaningful participation and including their voice in the design, implementation, assessment and governance of skills development;
- **responsive to emergencies**, adopting a conflict-sensitive approach and recognizing the role of skills development in reducing the harmful effects of emergencies on young people's wellbeing and

development as well as their role in promoting more peaceful, stable societies and encouraging social cohesion, reconciliation and peacebuilding;

- **innovative**, harnessing the power of different technologies and innovations to support improved access, delivery, and monitoring of skills development programmes in an equitable manner.



## Higher order theory of change and outcomes

The Global Framework on Transferable Skills is inspired by the 1996 UNESCO Delors Report, *Learning: The Treasure Within*. The Framework reconceptualizes the purposes of learning in the ‘four pillars of learning’ of the Delors Report into four learning dimensions that lead to holistic human development:

### Learning to know/the Cognitive Dimension:

- enabling individuals to think, analyse, focus, comprehend, and create to develop an appropriate and adequate foundation for future learning;

### Learning to do/the Instrumental Dimension:

- enabling individuals to participate effectively in the economy and society;

### Learning to be/the Individual Dimension:

- empowering individuals to overcome adversity, develop to their fullest potential and become well-balanced persons;

### Learning to live together/the Social Dimension:

- promoting individuals to act based on values related to human rights, democratic principles, intercultural understanding and respect and the promotion of non-violence conflict resolution and peace at all levels of society.

Inspired by this, the Framework proposes that the development of a breadth of transferable skills at scale across the life course through multiple learning pathways contributes to the following four outcomes (see Figure 4).

**Figure 4** Four outcomes of skills development

**In Burundi**, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Education and civil society organizations in life skills programming for adolescent girls and boys. The establishment of solidarity groups allowed adolescents to exercise self-reliance and their newly acquired life skills in addition to income-generating micro-projects, skills in negotiation, peacebuilding, conflict management and emotional management. Through peer education, more than 27,463 adolescents (about 50% girls) were reached.

**In Nigeria**, UNICEF supported the empowerment of 45,983 girls through the Girls for Girls initiative, which aimed to improve leadership skills, life skills and citizenship education. These girls are raising their voices and demanding an end to early marriage and girls' exclusion from education.



**In Egypt**, UNICEF is supporting the government in mainstreaming life skills in curriculum frameworks for pre-primary and primary, as well as the development of grade level teacher training and assessment frameworks, supporting the training of more than 138,000 teachers.

**In Bangladesh**, BRAC, with technical assistance from UNICEF and ILO, has provided 35,777 adolescents over five years (56% girls) with access to quality informal apprenticeships and life skills and technical training. Young people undertake a 6-month certified programme of on-the-job and classroom-based training in selected trades and occupations. Two years after completing the training, 77 per cent of girls continue to be employed in relevant trades, with a reduction in early marriage.

The proposed Theory of Change is based on the following assumptions: (a) if all children and youth have equal **access** to learning opportunities through multiple pathways; (b) if the provided learning opportunities are of high quality, **put transferable skills at the core** and

explicitly contribute to the four outcome areas; and (c) if the developed programmes are grounded in the **key principles**, this will foster a generation ready to leap into the future equipped to learn, work, actively engage, and take control of their own growth and empowerment.





# 3. Operationalizing the Global Framework on Transferable Skills

## Addressing terminology challenges

One of the key challenges in skills development is navigating the various terminologies used in the field. The terms ‘skills’ and ‘competencies’ are often used interchangeably, with competencies most often referring to knowledge, skills, and attitudes in curriculum development. Furthermore, many other terms such as life skills, 21st century skills, soft skills and socio-emotional skills are often used interchangeably to describe transferable skills. These terms may coincide, partially overlap or draw conflicting definition boundaries. Finally, when it comes to describing a particular skill, the description, conceptualization and development of that skill may vary based on context and age. This Framework adopts the term transferable skills to highlight the *transferability* of these skills across different disciplines and domains and their relevance to the four interrelated life outcomes (see Figure 4). **This framework acknowledges that policy-makers and implementers might choose to use other terminology that is more relevant to their context.**

Confusion or lack of clarity caused by terminology can have programmatic impacts, namely misalignment of approaches due to the way certain skills are defined or conceptualized. Arriving at a common set of terminologies and definitions has proven to be intractable, but the Ecological Approaches to Social Emotional Learning (EASEL) Laboratory of the Harvard Graduate School of Education is developing a [visualization tool](#) comparing different skills frameworks to build coherence and a common understanding.

In the meanwhile, and to improve coordination and technical coherence, **policymakers and implementers should strive to explain their use of terminology and definitions clearly and transparently and seek a similar level of explanation from other collaborating entities.<sup>72</sup>**

**According to this rationale and to facilitate reading and engaging with the Framework, the terms ‘skills’ and ‘transferable skills’ will be used interchangeably unless otherwise indicated.**

## Identifying and analysing a breadth of transferable skills

Multiple national, regional and global skills frameworks define general or specific essential skills, or skills that focus on a particular outcome, such as employability or reducing violent behaviour. Some national systems and programmes have already chosen and defined certain skills through frameworks or high-level policy/ strategy documents, while others are re-thinking skills within the context of education reform or programme improvement.

**Rather than attempt to name specific skills in a context of competing definitions, this Framework advocates for engaging in a process of identifying and analysing a breadth of transferable skills.**

The **skills selection process** in this Framework illustrates and is inspired by a process undertaken in the MENA-CPF development which identified, defined, and analysed 12 core life skills.

**Many UNICEF regional and country offices have utilized the MENA-CPF as a starting point to engage with governments and other stakeholders.**

In the instances where skills or frameworks have been already identified, the process can provide additional insight to adapt those frameworks and to refine the selection and analysis of transferable skills.

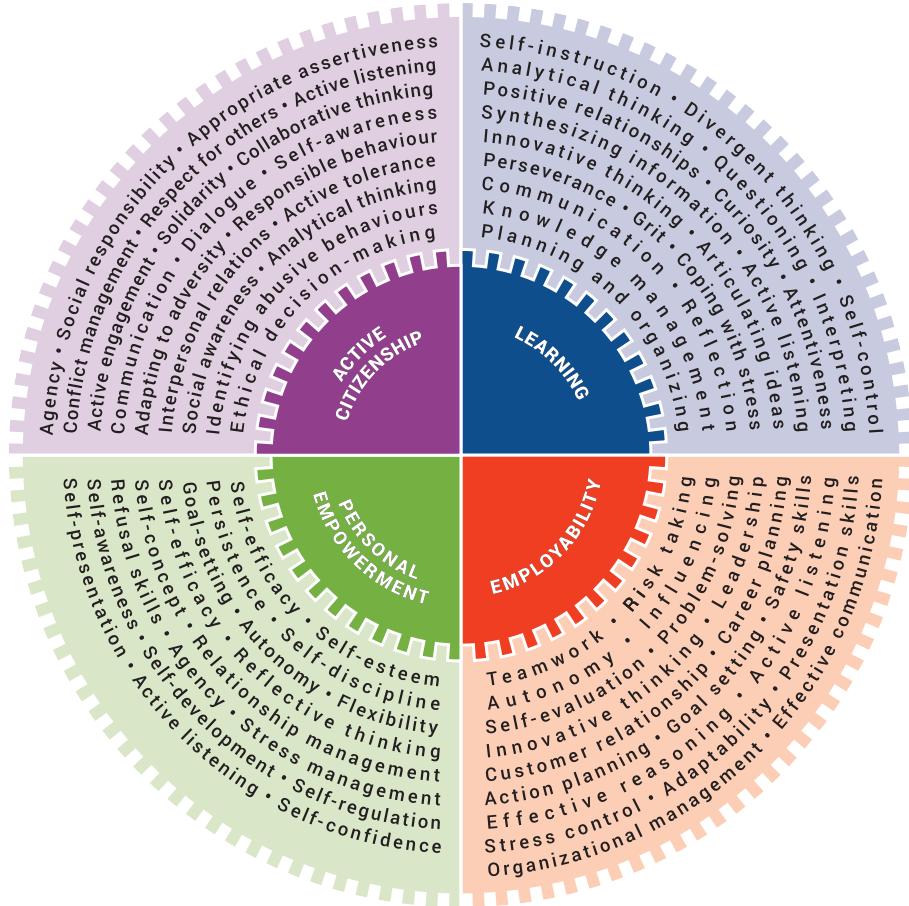
**This process should be guided by technical experts and underpinned by a solid understanding of evidence and literature on skills development coupled with a robust multi-stakeholder engagement process that is relevant to the particular context and includes the private sector and active participation of children and adolescents.**

**1. Identify an initial group of skills** that contribute to the four outcome areas of life-long learning, employability and entrepreneurship, personal empowerment, and active citizenship. Skill selection

should be guided by reviews of national, regional, and global frameworks and policy documents, and if feasible, national consultations with relevant stakeholders.

In the development of the MENA-CPF, technical experts led the multi-stakeholder process to identify a comprehensive listing of skills related to the four outcomes by analysing a broad range of relevant international, regional, and national frameworks. In an additional step, the skills that contributed most to a certain outcome were clustered around that outcome area (see Figure 5).

**Figure 5** Initial skills selection and clustering in MENA



**2. Identify and analyse a core group of skills** to be included in programming. Through further analysis and stakeholder consultation to ensure relevance, the process leads to the selection of a group of core skills. Core skill selection should consider the following guidelines:

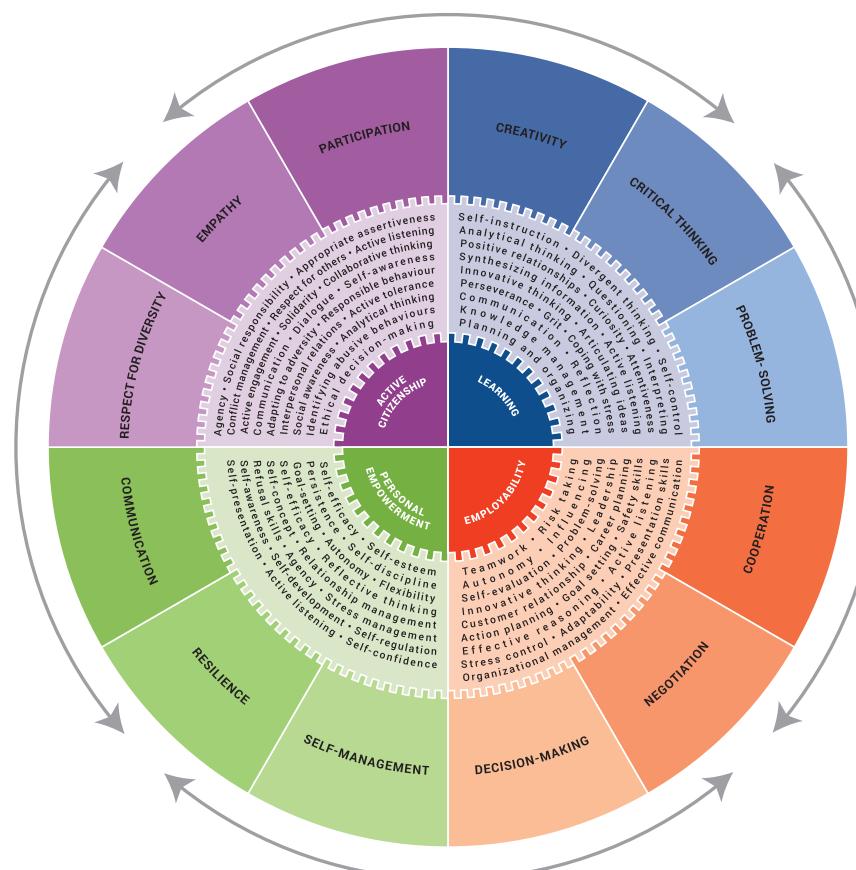
- select a **manageable or limited number** of core skills: because age-specific learning standards and programme progressions must be developed for each skill as demonstrated in step 3, a limited number will allow easier integration into curricula, pedagogy, and assessment;
- select **higher-order skills** and **identify related sub-skills** to add depth and understanding;

- select a **balance of cognitive, social, and emotional skills**;
- select skills **relevant to a particular** national and local **context**.

In the development of the MENA-CPF, technical experts engaged in further analysis and a consultation process that included representatives from government, donors, civil society, academia, adolescents, and the private sector to identify 12 core transferable skills (see Figure 6).

At the end of this step and based on analysis, simple mapping tables were created for each core transferable skill to reveal other skills that the core skill subsumes to add depth and understanding to the scope of each skill. Below, is an

**Figure 6** Identification of core transferable skills in MENA



example of the mapping showing three core skills chosen in the outcome area of life-long learning (see Box 1).

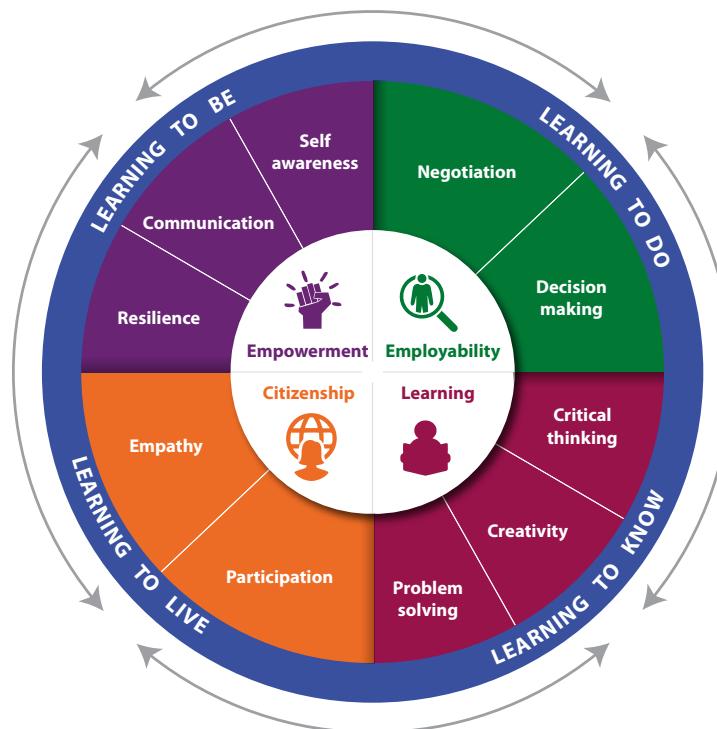
This flexible skills selection process can be used in any context to identify a certain number of relevant

transferable skills. With the support of education experts and by building on the work and analysis conducted to develop the MENA-CPF, the India and Egypt UNICEF Country Offices supported their respective governments in developing their own list of skills (see Figures 7 and 8).

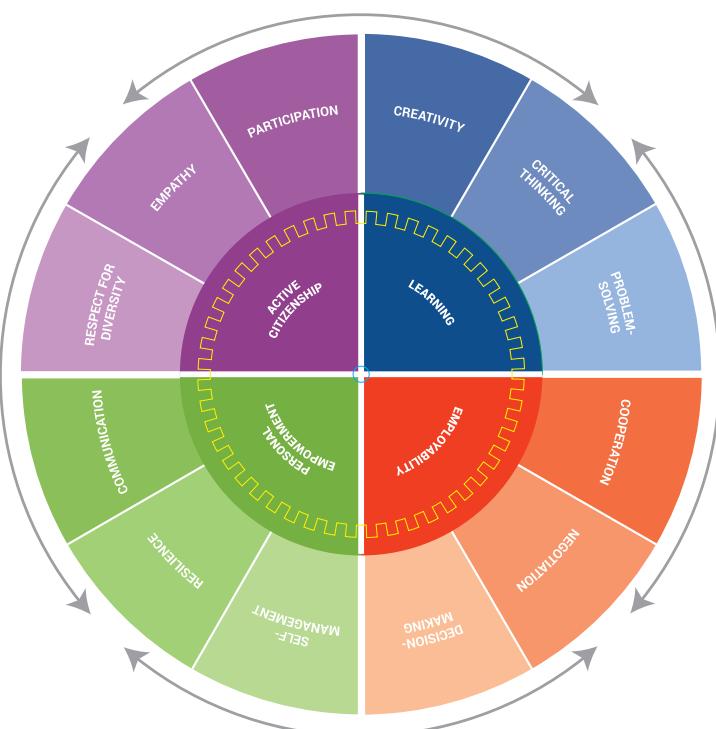
### Box 1: Example of analysis of subskills

Life-long learning skills	Related life-long learning skills
Creativity	innovative thinking, divergent thinking, articulating ideas, analysis, synthesis, agency
Critical thinking	meta-cognitive skills (thinking about thinking), questioning, interpreting information, synthesizing, listening, self-protection, social responsibility
Problem-solving	curiosity, attentiveness, analytical thinking, active engagement

**Figure 7** Transferable skills identified in India



**Figure 8** Transferable skills identified in Egypt



Within this step, it is important to highlight that:

- **despite being situated in only one outcome area, each skill has relevance to all outcome areas;**
- **all skills work together and contribute to all outcome areas;** identifying the final set of skills is dependent on context and country priorities and all skills as a whole must be considered as a dynamic simultaneously interacting set of skills that contribute to all outcome areas.

### 3. Conduct further analysis of transferable skills

to operationalise them into both upstream and downstream components of the education system, discussed in the next chapter. Technical experts should further define and analyse each skill to serve a range of stakeholders and include a stakeholder review process to ensure clarity, simplicity and consistent terminology.<sup>73</sup> There are various types and levels of skills analyses (see Table 1).



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**Table 1** Analysis of transferable skills

Type of Analysis	Description/Output	Potential Use	Example
Simple description	Each skill is briefly described	High level policy documents, communication and advocacy documents	An example of a simple definition of a skill: Cooperation is an act or process of working together to get something done or to achieve a common purpose that is mutually beneficial <sup>74</sup>
Outcome/relevance/gender	Each skill is analysed based on its relevance to the four outcome areas and the local context. Further gender analysis articulates the relevance of each skill for girls and boys in actively reducing the harmful effects of gender norms, roles and relations, including gender inequality and power imbalances in girls' relationships.	High level policy documents, strategy documents, communication and advocacy documents, Curricula, pedagogy and assessment	<a href="#">MENA LSCE Skills Briefs are an example of the relevance analyses.</a>  An excerpt from gender analysis of the skill of negotiation: Negotiation skills combine thinking and social skills relevant to protecting the rights of the young person, including, for example, sexual and reproductive rights. Negotiation skills can be critical for young people, especially girls who are...resisting early marriage in their own lives and who often face gender discrimination more widely within their families and communities.
Age-related benchmarks and learning progressions	Detailed level of analysis to operationalise the framework by embedding the skills into teaching and learning practices  Different approaches require different types and levels of analysis.  Identify sequenced and age-related progressions and standards towards specific learning objectives.	Curricula, pedagogy and assessment frameworks, tools, and documents	<a href="#">State of Kansas Social-Emotional Character Development Standards (SECD)</a>  <a href="#">Australian Curriculum (critical and creative thinking example)</a>  <a href="#">Kenya Curriculum Design</a>  <a href="#">Step by Step Standalone Curriculum (Grade 9 example)</a>  <a href="#">International technical guidance on sexuality education (pages 33-73)</a>

## Programmatic approaches

### Grounded in a multiple pathways approach: Equity, diversity, and flexibility

A multiple pathways approach to education and training assumes that **skills development can take place at different times, in various settings and contexts and through various providers**. By expanding available learning pathways and connecting them, open learning systems can be created where knowledge and skills can more easily be updated, learners can gain agency, and more innovative ways of working can potentially emerge.

Multiple learning pathways can address some challenges in education and training enrolment and completion and respond to skills needs created by rapid societal and economic changes and more efficiently use scarce resources for education and learning systems.

**Multiple pathways also become critical in situations of conflict and crisis to promote equal access to skills development opportunities for marginalised groups.** A range of flexible formal, non-formal and informal learning opportunities should be progressively provided to crisis-affected children and youth, such as accelerated education models and child-centred safe spaces that target those over-age and out-of-school to ensure the continuity of learning opportunities for all.

Multiple pathways should also be established for the host community population to ease any tensions that emerge over the extra strain on local resources.

Adaptive approaches can remove barriers to access and meet the diverse learning needs of particular groups in situations of adversity. For example, by ensuring flexible class schedules, hours, shifts and annual timelines, waiving documentation requirements for enrolment such as birth certificates or school records, providing child-care services for young parents, and ensuring safe access routes to and from centres of learning, access barriers are lowered or abolished.

For children and youth exposed to violence and traumatic experiences, culturally grounded mediums for creative expression can also be an important vehicle for skills development. Social engagement opportunities that build on local culture and traditions such as art, music, drama and sports can foster a sense of belonging, connection, and positive identity where violence and crisis have weakened the social fabric. Grief-focused art activities and child-centred play therapy can also support skills development and reduce symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression that impede children's readiness to learn.

There are a variety of well-established multiple pathways for skills development (see Figure 9).

**Figure 9** Multiple pathways for skills development

A high-quality multiple pathways approach meets the needs of the learners and **promotes equity and inclusiveness** by offering more opportunities to reconcile social norms and expectations, home duties, work and learning prospects. This is particularly the case for working children, young mothers, refugees and displaced people. More education and training alternatives also improve the chances of success in training/employment transitions for youth with disabilities.<sup>75</sup>

Learners can be incentivized to use multiple pathways through access to information and incentives.<sup>76</sup> To maintain coherent learner experiences across pathways, stakeholders and implementers should coordinate, under ministries of education in most cases, to recognize prior learning outside formal schooling, and whenever relevant, develop common measurement and certification system/standards of the learners'

acquired knowledge and skills.<sup>77</sup> In settings where refugees are denied access to formal schooling, stakeholders and implementers should encourage local and country-of-origin education authorities to recognize and provide accreditation for non-formal education.

In crisis and conflict settings, access to education and skills-development opportunities can be affected, interrupted or discontinued. Displaced children and youth, especially secondary school-age youth, are disproportionately affected. However, crisis can provide access to opportunities and pathways to reach previously excluded or marginalised groups by offering non-formal skills development opportunities, integrating them into formal systems, and preparing youth with skills for the world of work.

For each of the outcomes intended in skills programming, a multiple pathways approach can be applied. For

example, a multiple pathways approach can be applied to improving employment and entrepreneurship outcomes and highlight the need for clear and coherent linkages and coordination between different pathways and service providers (see Box 2).

**Box 2: Three main pathways to enhance employability and entrepreneurship outcomes**

Pathway	Description
Formal Education (pre-employment)	pre-tertiary public institution-based skills training (schools and/or vocational training centres), largely at the upper secondary level (operated by ministries of education, ministries of labour and other ministries);  private-for-profit and private-non-profit school-/vocational training centre-based skills training, largely at upper secondary level;  tertiary level training (public and private)
Non-formal skills training (pre-employment or while in-work)	youth/adult non-formal skills training (often short duration, typically 4–6 months, and offering skills training only or combined interventions that include skills training as one of a number of interventions (employment services/placement); often combine delivery of foundational, transferable and technical-vocational skills, and typically delivered by civil society organizations;
Work based training (pre-employment or on the job)	training before employment, including both formal and informal apprenticeships;  training during employment, including training of employee in formal firms and informal learning by doing

## Programme intervention areas: Teaching and Learning, Enabling Environments and System Strengthening

**Within a multiple pathways approach, and to achieve scale, sustainability and long-term change in national education and learning systems,** the Framework suggests actions in the areas of Teaching and Learning, Enabling Environments and Systems Strengthening to enhance the four outcomes of life-long learning, employability and entrepreneurship, personal empowerment, and active citizenship (see Figure 10).

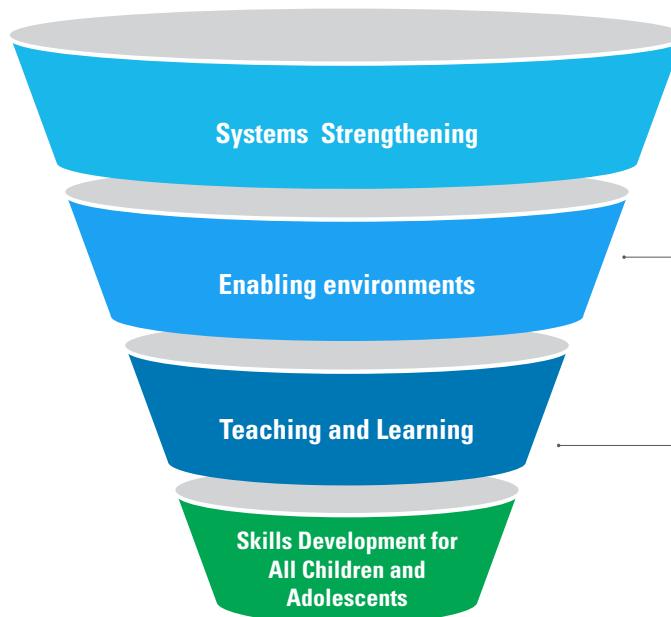
The following guidelines can aid in planning and designing programme actions

- develop an understanding of the **results** intended and the **target population** (for example, improved learning outcomes for out-of-school children; improved employability for TVET students; reducing child

marriage for adolescent girls; improved psychosocial wellbeing of refugee children; or improved social cohesion among refugee and host community youth);

- develop an understanding of the **evidence** showing what has worked and not worked to achieve certain outcomes in a certain or similar context or with a similar population;
- develop an understanding of the current **bottle-necks/limitations** (for example, resources, political will, technical expertise, mandate, societal and gender norms, social tension, insecurity, displacement, and lack of or interruption in basic services) to achieve a certain outcome within a particular context and whether there are bottlenecks/limitations outside of your control or mandate;
- develop an understanding of the **skills development landscape and players**, mapping partners and stakeholders with an analysis of strengths, weaknesses,

**Figure 10** Programmatic intervention areas through multiple pathways



### SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

Systems Strengthening: Achieving scale and sustainability requires skills development to be addressed within all components of education systems and throughout multiple pathways, especially upstream components (national policies and plans, curricula frameworks, coordination and partnership frameworks, qualification frameworks, budgeting and financing, human resources and capacity development, and monitoring and evaluation).

### ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

Enabling Environments: Effective skills development requires learning environments in which all learners can participate and feel physically, socially and emotionally safe. This is fostered by good school governance and accountability mechanisms, parent and children participation in school-based management, and the larger community engagement.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching and Learning: Effective skills development programming requires aligning curriculum, appropriate pedagogical and assessment practices to address the needs of all learners.

opportunities and threats (SWOT) to decide where to intervene; this includes developing an understanding of coordination mechanisms, intersectoral linkages, and financing structures in crisis settings;

- develop an understanding of **resources** available to act, including financial and human resources and technological, organizational and operational capacity, especially material resources, availability and reliability of information systems, and government response capacity in humanitarian settings.

#### Programme action in the area of teaching and learning

**Curricula, pedagogy and assessment** are the main components of the Teaching and Learning programme intervention area. Teaching and Learning practices are central to the acquisition of transferable skills and are at the core of systems-related interventions such as educational reform. Each skill contributes to all the outcomes of life-long learning, employment and entrepreneurship, personal empowerment and active citizenship.

Skills development does not occur in isolation from real world purposes and content. Skills are contextual, and their acqui-

sition and application depend on purpose, use and mastery of subject knowledge, and specific context in which they are developed. As such, the development and mastery of a skill in one context does not automatically translate to its mastery in another. To enhance this ‘transferability,’ learning opportunities for skills development in different contexts must be provided.<sup>78</sup>

**Note that transferable skills should not be confused with subject areas, which are understood as thematic, technical or academic areas of contextual knowledge.**

This Framework defines a number of subject areas within which transferable skills (and other skills) are embedded and developed (see Box 3).

Skills development in Teaching and Learning should be framed in a life-long learning perspective because it is an iterative, progressive, and cumulative process that requires regular practice and grows in complexity over time. Ideally, learners begin in early childhood to retain skills and the ability to learn throughout life, encouraged and enabled to take up learning opportunities within family, in school, through peers, in the workplace and in citizenship or community service.

#### Box 3: Common subject areas through which transferable skills are developed

- curricular disciplines (language, math, science, social studies, sports, arts)
- technical and vocational disciplines (carpentry, plumbing)
- career education (career guidance, financial literacy, job searching)
- entrepreneurship education (goal setting, business planning, marketing)
- digital literacy (ICT, social media)
- health education (reproductive health, sexuality education, HIV/AIDS prevention, drug prevention, nutrition, hygiene)
- environmental education (water, pollution, climate change, recycling)
- emergency education (disaster risk reduction and risk informed programming, mine risks)
- peace education (conflict resolution, negotiation)
- citizenship and civic education (citizenship, duties and rights of citizens)

**Pre-primary and adolescent education can provide unique windows of opportunity to realize the benefits of skills development.** Failure to invest in quality and skills-based pre-primary education has many long-lasting negative impacts. In fact, poor quality pre-primary education has a causal effect, diminishing life opportunities, labour market participation, and future earnings, which in turn can contribute to inter-generational cycles of poverty and heighten the risk of other key rights deprivations, including poorer health and protection outcomes. It is easier and less costly to prevent a problem than to try to rectify it later, making investment in pre-primary education skills development both necessary and strategic.<sup>79</sup>

Likewise, skills development for adolescent learners between 10–19 years of age provides an opportunity to “influence developmental trajectories and make up for poor childhood experiences...and is a “critical period for individual identity development precisely when adolescents are figuring out who they want to be in the world. Skills development at this juncture provides a prime opportunity for growth, exploration and creativity.”<sup>80</sup>

Many examples exist of UNICEF skills development programming in both pre-primary and adolescent skills development (see Box 4).

#### **Box 4: Seizing opportunities for skills development in pre-primary and adolescent education**

##### **Seizing the opportunity in Serbia...**

In Serbia, a country with a high number of young children, a new Preschool Curriculum Framework, ‘Years of Ascent,’ was developed with UNICEF support and adopted in 2018. Designed for children from 6 months to 6.5 years, the framework addresses important skills such as self-confidence, openness, curiosity, perseverance, resilience and creativity. The framework encourages family participation and uses a child-centred, developmentally appropriate and play-based pedagogy. The Serbian Ministry of Education plans to add 17,000 preschool spaces and implement a comprehensive capacity-building programme to train approximately 70 per cent of preschool teachers in modern preschool pedagogy.

##### **...and in Lebanon**

In Lebanon, UNICEF and the International Labour Organization (ILO) have supported relevant Government ministries (MEHE, MoL, MoA, NVTC and MoSA), key NGOs and private sector in developing the National Strategic Framework on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Lebanon (TVET NSF), which was launched by the Prime Minister and reconfirmed the Government of Lebanon renewed commitment to promote and improve the TVET system to not only prepare youth with job-specific skills but also transferable skills. UNICEF also collaborated with UNFPA to support the Ministry of Youth and Sport (MoYS) to develop an Action Plan for the National Youth Policy (NYP) which has also prioritized the development of transferable skills. Both of the initiatives have been successfully completed, producing two key strategic umbrella frameworks for youth programming and the opportunity for the government, donors and other UN agencies to coalesce around a prioritized set of recommendations.

In harmonizing curricula, pedagogy and assessment for skills development, context and relevance is critical. The curriculum, pedagogy and assessment for skills development interventions in refugee settings largely relies on programme models from humanitarian aid partners which need to go through a process of adaptation.

When curriculum, pedagogy and assessment programming is adopted from another context, a process of adapting, piloting, assessing, and refining the programming<sup>81</sup> should be carried out by key stakeholders (local technical experts, community members, youth and the private sector) based on priority, greatest impact, available resources and ease.

To enhance this alignment, the Framework proposes the following main principles to underpin Teaching and Learning approaches:

- **Age-appropriate:**

Approaches to support the development of transferable skills should be adapted to suit different age groups of children and adolescents depending on needs, level of development, and capabilities. A substantial body of evidence primarily from the fields of psychology and neuroscience supports this principle. Skills development in the early years, age 0-5, when the brain is still forming, provides an optimal period to set the foundation for the development of further skills in later stages.<sup>82</sup> Adolescence, a period when cognitive abilities experience major growth, provides another window for opportunity to reinforce skills developed earlier or to develop new skills.

- **Sequenced:**

Because skills development is progressive and cumulative, pedagogical approaches should be sequenced to consider whether learners have mastered the prerequisites.<sup>83</sup> Furthermore, clear learning progressions that articulate a sequence of “observable, measurable behaviours or demonstration” for each skill must be developed<sup>84</sup> to serve as the backbone of any intervention in the Teaching and Learning area of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment.

- **Focused and explicit:**

Teaching and learning approaches should include components that are specifically focused on skills development.<sup>85</sup> The skills should be communicated clearly so that learners understand the concepts well enough to translate them to real-life situations.<sup>86</sup>

- **Needs-based:**

To ensure equity and inclusiveness, skills development opportunities should be made available for all learners based on their needs. Learner-centred approaches are personalized using the assessed needs of each learner and employ different learning modes, including self-paced learning. For learners with learning difficulties or specific impairments, targeted support or materials are provided.

- **Gender-responsive:**

Gender-responsive approaches should take gender inclusiveness into account when developing content, planning lessons, teaching, managing the classroom and assessment,<sup>87</sup> paying attention to the specific learning needs of girls and boys and recognizing that boys and girls will often apply skills differently. Designing curricula and pedagogy that work for girls requires adopting the perspectives of girls and addressing harmful gender stereotypes. In crisis, programme approaches should identify the different risks boys and girls face, such as different physical or psychological threats to safety, and sensitize responses accordingly.

**In humanitarian settings, skills development frequently relies on programme models with specialized curricula for psychosocial support and social emotional learning developed by humanitarian aid partners.** Tool kits and guidance must be adapted to respond to the culture, age, and gender needs in a particular setting. However, whenever possible, skills development should also be integrated into the existing school curricula being employed in that setting. Integrated approaches should include specific psychosocial support and social emotional learning activities that help build a culture of individual wellbeing and social cohesion. The INEE Guidance Note on Psychosocial Support

suggests that “this may take the form of explicit content, the promotion of certain skills, or the mitigation of actions, attitudes and behaviours that can be explicitly or implicitly embedded in the curriculum.”<sup>88</sup>

### ***Skills development in curricula***

Skills development programming uses various curriculum, content and delivery approaches. The goal for education programmers, policymakers, and teacher/facilitators is to identify a combination of curriculum modalities that optimize learning outcomes for all learners while taking context and available resources into account.

Some countries have integrated skills development into competency-based curricula, meaning that a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes is integrated into specific or multiple subjects.<sup>89</sup> The promise of the integrated approach is that the learning experience is coherent, continuous and reinforced throughout different subjects.

Competency-based curriculum reform, however, is a complex and resource-intensive process, and while many countries are investing in this approach, there has been limited success.<sup>90 91</sup> In fact, in less-resourced countries where pedagogical challenges remain, poorly implemented competency-based curricula may actually exacerbate poor learning outcomes.

In many contexts, competency-based curriculum reform efforts tend to focus on content without a similar investment in high quality pre- and in-service professional development so that teachers and others can competently deliver the curriculum. The lack of quality assessment tools to ensure that learning outcomes are achieved presents another common challenge.

In addition to these main principles of teaching and learning, further key considerations can help in the development of an effective competency-based curricula (see Box 5).



## Box 5: Developing competency-based curricula: Key considerations

- Recognize that skills development is not specific to any particular subject area but broadly applicable to all fields of knowledge;
- Ensure a coherent well-resourced approach that goes beyond the content and organization aspects of curriculum design to include pre- and in-service teacher development, assessment and learning environments;
- Ensure multi-stakeholder engagement/consultation led by government, educators, private sector, civil society and youth to define realistic reform objectives of the current education system that align with national aspirations;
- Ensure that skills development begins at an early age for maximum impact; that levels of skill development are defined across learning cycles (pre-primary, primary, secondary, and post-secondary) and that the conceptualization of skills/competencies is consistent across curricula, pedagogy, and assessment;
- Provide practical examples of learning activities that encourage reflective, experiential and active learning, including life skills conducive methods such as brainstorming, group work, games, group discussion and debate;
- Introduce multi-disciplinary experimental learning to help identify and solve real-life problems and build on learner prior experiences;
- Enable linkages between curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular interventions that are explicit across the general curriculum and relate to cross-curricular themes.

Source: MENA LSCE (UNICEF, 2017); ESARO Think Piece (UNICEF, 2018).

In some countries, **standalone programmes** have also been used to promote skills in crosscutting curricular themes.<sup>92</sup> In this approach, adding skills to the existing national curriculum as a separate subject present allows for the delivery of skills development in targeted and specific ways by a lower number of specialized teachers who are highly capable rather than reskilling the whole teacher cadre. Paradoxically, however, this approach can contribute to curriculum overload as well as a disconnect in the learning experience of each child as they navigate between skills development and more traditional approaches. One example of a standalone programme of transferable skills is Step by Step<sup>93</sup> (see Box 6).

Standalone programmes are also often extra-curricular or delivered through non-formal education through various pathways such as transition to work, child protection, social engagement, adolescent participation, or girl empowerment programmes (see Figure 9). These are usually not bound by rigid content, allowing for flexible pedagogical approaches and the use of outside facilitators. Besides skills development, learning outcomes of these programmes can be both academic and non-academic. For example, outcomes can be linked to the non-academic outcomes of lifelong learning, employability and entrepreneurship, personal empowerment, and active citizenship.

## Box 6: Step by Step Curriculum: Transferable skills for children and adolescents

The [Step by Step toolkit](#), developed by the World Bank with external contributors, equips teachers with resources to help students better understand and manage their emotions, thoughts, impulses and behaviours; form and sustain positive relationships; and make responsible decisions and pursue meaningful goals.

The Step by Step framework focuses on six life skills for children ages 6 through 17:

- self-awareness
- self-regulation
- social awareness
- positive communication
- determination
- responsible decision-making

*Each toolkit contains:*

**Teacher materials:** A guide with structured lessons of 450 minutes, a list of materials needed to implement each lesson, key concepts, tips for teachers and parents, and answers to frequently asked questions;

**Student materials:** A workbook for each student with illustrated worksheets to use as part of the lessons;

**Classroom Materials:** Posters to aid in social and emotional learning as well as materials expressly for primary children (storybooks and a CD with songs)

Age-appropriate and gender-responsive learning materials that integrate transferable skills into an existing curriculum is a promising model in countries with limited teacher capacity, where curriculum reform is not an option, or where transferable skills are not identified in the curriculum. In this model, teachers can use these materials to develop skills while also delivering the knowledge outcomes dictated by the formal curriculum. An example of this approach comes from the work undertaken by UNICEF to support the Ministry of Education and Higher Education in the State of Palestine (see Box 7).

NISSEM, a group of international academics and practitioners, promotes a ‘wide coverage’ approach to skills development in crisis-affected settings through

specially tailored teaching and learning materials. This includes textbooks and separate books or materials with age-appropriate stories that build key transferable skills.<sup>94</sup> The group purports that the ‘wide coverage’ model can reach a large number of students and teachers using less intensive methods than experiential learning.

Finally, some models of transferable skills development have skipped curricular content altogether and focused entirely on implementing simple pedagogical practices to foster the breadth of skills.<sup>95</sup> These models, which are worth exploring in low-capacity and low-resource settings, and which may serve as starting points leading to more comprehensive approaches, will be further described in the following section on pedagogy.

## Box 7: Experiential Learning Objects (xLOBs) in The State of Palestine supported by UNICEF

The Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) was an active participant in the MENA-CPF consultations. In their subsequent curriculum reform process, the MoEHE, UNICEF, and Birzeit University engaged in a process to support teachers in implementing the new curriculum by improving and more clearly articulating the breadth of skills for all learners in alignment with the LSE framework.

To achieve this, gender responsive Experiential Learning Objects (xLOBs) were developed by experienced curriculum designers from Birzeit University for grades 1–4.

xLOBs are learning materials that are in line with—and complement—the existing required textbooks and curriculum. Teachers take a short professional development course about experiential learning and student-centred teaching to learn how to integrate life skills lessons into their teaching to support student learning achievement (the development of new knowledge, skills, and attitudes). The course includes teacher guidance on using observational/formative assessment tools for the skills.

An impact study of the programme is ongoing and demonstrating improved development of LSE framework life skills. The xLOBs model is currently being expanded to other grades and other countries in MENA, including in Jordan to support work with Syrian refugees.

### *Skills development through pedagogy*

Pedagogy, the method and practice of teaching, is fundamental to transferable skills development. While there should be a **balance between direct or traditional teaching and active learning approaches**, transferable skills are better taught through ‘doing’ rather than through abstract theory or memorization. In fact, **active learning approaches** (see Box 8) have been shown to best support transferable skills development.<sup>96</sup>

When adapted to the needs of crisis-affected contexts, active learning and play-based pedagogy can foster skills that support the psychosocial wellbeing and individual resilience processes of children and adolescents. Some best practices that should be stressed include cooperative games that foster social cohesion and cooperation, social awareness stimulations that promote empathy and understanding, visualization exercises that ask learners to consider their future goals, activities

that focus on developing self-awareness to encourage learners to reflect on their abilities and breathing or relaxation exercises that help learners to recognize and manage their own emotions.<sup>97</sup> These pedagogies can also facilitate healing, foster a sense of belonging and community, and have the potential to promote social cohesion. Teachers can infuse skill building into the school curriculum or target skills in out-of-school learning opportunities.<sup>98</sup>

**Mindfulness and mindfulness-based pedagogical approaches** have also been gaining prominence in the promotion of the wellbeing and the social and emotional competence of young people,<sup>99</sup> including children and youth in crisis-affected contexts.<sup>100</sup> These methods improve attention in general<sup>101</sup> and performance on tasks that require attention.<sup>102</sup> Mindfulness-based approaches are also associated with emotion regulation,<sup>103</sup> reinforcing the development and practice of other cognitive and inter-personal skills.

## Box 8: Active Learning Strategies

- **warm up activities:** help the learners feel more comfortable working in groups and with the topic or content;
- **brainstorming:** is a creative technique to generate ideas on a subject which helps develop life skills in listening, assertiveness and empathy;
- **small group work:** consists of exercises in pairs or small group discussions can improve learner ability to participate and provide a safe space for learning (IYF, 2014);
- **class discussion:** compliments small group work and provides an opportunity for learners to learn from one another and encourage participation;
- **role play:** acts out a scenario based on a text or real-life situation suggested by the instructor or learners and is considered perhaps the most important method in life skills teaching and learning (WHO, 1993);
- **debate:** offers opportunities to practice higher-order thinking skills and to address issues creatively and in depth;
- **processing questions:** can be used to structure life skills lessons (What is the lesson about? What have I learned from the lesson? How can I apply the learning to everyday life?)
- **reflection activities:** are often done individually and can assist learners to process and apply learned skills

Delivery modalities, known more simply as teaching methods, broadly consist of **face-to-face learning, eLearning/online learning and blended learning**. Standard face-to-face learning with both the teacher and learners in the classroom is the most common and familiar delivery approach and relies heavily on the role of the facilitator. Digital modalities in crisis-affected settings present both opportunities and challenges: critical, life-saving knowledge can be delivered quickly via digital devices, but a number of factors must be in place for learning outcomes to improve. While there is potential for digital modalities to support skills development in crisis settings, very little research and evidence is available to guide programme decisions.<sup>104</sup>

eLearning and online learning delivery of quality education and skills development has been gaining interest through its potential to reach all learners,<sup>105</sup> and new technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and adaptive systems to address the challenges of teachers

are also being investigated<sup>106</sup>. Technology clearly eases many important educational administrative tasks, such as tracking and maintaining the learning records and qualifications of marginalised learners and refugees. In terms of delivery, technology can ideally provide cost effective, tailored ‘anytime and anywhere’ learning and skills development opportunities to all learners. To advance the role of technology in skills development, evidence needs to be built on the impact of technology on cost-effectiveness and equity in terms of opportunity and quality of learning.

A combination of face-to-face and online modalities is referred to as blended or hybrid learning. Because using technology to replace humans creates challenges in developing social emotional skills such as self-management, self-awareness, problem solving, collaboration and resilience<sup>107</sup>, there remains general agreement on the central role of the teacher to develop certain skills.<sup>108</sup>

Blended learning is suitable for all ages with varied degrees of digital integration. At one extreme, face-to-face interactions can dominate with some online activities substituting for class discussion; at the other is a ‘flipped class’ in which all content is facilitated online and the teachers and learners only meet face-to-face for consultations. Blended learning strategies vary according to the subject discipline, the grade level, learner characteristics and expected learning outcomes. Besides being cost effective, blended learning can increase access and flexibility for learners, increase levels of active learning, achieve better student experiences and outcomes and transform the role of the teacher.

As evidence continues to be gathered on eLearning and blended learning approaches, their use can be considered with ongoing assessment to mitigate potential harm and ensure positive impact. As with other eLearning approaches, blended learning requires internet, and because Learning Management Systems licenses can be costly, learners need to be able to troubleshoot technical issues to prevent course disruptions<sup>109</sup>. More concerning, only 14 per cent of people in low income countries and 30 per cent of people in lower middle-income countries have access to the Internet<sup>110</sup>, and that access is heavily gendered, with the proportion of women using internet 12 per cent lower than that of men<sup>111</sup>. Unless attention is placed on context-specific solutions and approaches, the use of technology in education is likely to increase inequalities rather than to reduce them: those with access to the latest technologies and approaches may benefit, while those without access may not.<sup>112</sup>

In order to benefit from these approaches, the whole learning culture needs to focus on pedagogically sound programming and the careful adoption of technology. Using a promising delivery modality such as blended learning requires resources, equipment, a well-designed physical environment, effective learning materials, clear learning outcomes and proper teacher and facilitator preparation.<sup>113</sup>

**The role of teachers and instructors is crucial** within the context of skills development delivery through the different pathways. As enablers and facilitators, teachers are

key agents of change and must be qualified and willing to promote skills development through various approaches. As role models, they can provide real-life examples that embody the values, attitudes and behaviours that learners seek to acquire. In humanitarian settings, teachers can also provide basic psychosocial through skills development to support learners who have experienced mild psychological distress,<sup>114</sup> providing guidance in coping with stress and managing emotions. Overall, teachers demonstrating compassion and care for learners are essential to support young people’s wellbeing and drive skills development. Embedding practical social-emotional learning (SEL) activities into daily lessons is one way to build those positive relationships.<sup>115</sup>

Pre-service and on-going in-service professional development and support are critically important for teachers and instructors to develop both subject matter knowledge and the appropriate skills to support skills development in all learners in different learning environments.<sup>116 117</sup>

### *Assessing transferable skills development*

Assessment can be divided into two main types: formative and summative. Both types of assessment are used to determine the learning outcomes of skills development programming. **Formative assessments** are used to evaluate student comprehension, learning needs, and progress during a lesson, unit, or course. Mainly performed by a teacher/instructor using a wide variety of tools, formative assessment helps teachers to identify skills that students are having difficulty developing and to adjust lessons, instructional techniques and academic support.

**Summative assessments** are used to evaluate student learning and skills development at the end of a defined instructional period, for example at the end of a unit, non-formal course or school term. Summative assessments measure student progress toward specific learning standards and can be used to evaluate the overall effectiveness of educational programmes. Both formative and summative assessments can include analysing student work, portfolio reviews, classroom observation, simulations and games, peer-assessment, self-assessment, direct tests and mixed methods.

Research shows that **there is no one tool or approach that is able to assess learning outcomes for all learners**. A review of [300 assessment instruments](#) and approaches conducted under the USAID funded YouthPower<sup>118</sup> indicates a number of assessment challenges, including a) instrument reliability, validity and measurement invariance; b) the reliability of instruments to measure changes in skills over time; c) the prevalence of self-report methods, known to suffer from biases; e) difficulties developing or adapting instruments for use across cultures and contexts with limited resources; and f) difficulties identifying open (non-proprietary) and low-cost administration and analysis approaches. The low capacity of the teacher/facilitator to assess and provide feedback also emerged as a major challenge, especially within formative assessments relying on task performance, task observation or simulation. Furthermore, a field-mapping study examining monitoring, evaluation and research practices of programming for crisis-affected children and youth found significant variation in the quality of skills measurement tools, which

impeded policy and programme decision-making.<sup>119</sup> Addressing the critical need for high quality tools, the 3EA Measurement and Metrics Initiative is a consortium led by the International Rescue Committee and New York University Global TIES for Children that convened eight research-practice partnerships to develop, adapt and test a set of measurement tools to assess children's holistic learning and development, including social emotional learning, in crisis settings. The Measurement Library will launch in Fall 2019.

Depending on the purpose of the assessment, whether formative or summative, and the context within which it is applied, implementers are encouraged to use instruments that have already been tested and where evidence, even of a small amount, has been generated. In addition to being mindful of the limitations of assessment instruments, resource availability and teacher/ assessor capacity should also be considered.

There are a number of key considerations to keep in mind in developing skills assessment tools (see Box 9).

### Box 9: Developing skills assessment tools: Key considerations

The development of new skills assessment tools should:

- draw from existing tools;
- be validated for measuring change over time before being used;
- be designed specifically for programme use;
- be appropriate for age and culture of groups of interest, including marginalised learners;
- be capable of measuring multiple skills;
- be short, easy to administer and translated into the appropriate languages;
- result in data that is easy to analyse and report;
- incorporate multiple methods to mitigate the shortcomings of self-report;
- be developed and pilot-tested in multiple international programme contexts;

Source: Measuring Soft Skills & Life Skills in International Youth Development Programs: A Review and Inventory of Tools. Washington, DC: USAID's YouthPower Implementation IDIQ-Task Order 1, YouthPower Action.

**Regional large-scale assessments**, a type of summative assessment, also have an important role to play in examining and comparing learning outcomes either across participating countries or across regions within a single country. These assessments can help policy-makers and implementers make informed decisions and help learners reach their potential. An analysis of results from international large-scale assessments such as ICCS and PISA<sup>120</sup> may be helpful for countries to determine learning outcomes for a few select skills

such as problem-solving and critical thinking, but other core skills, especially social and emotional skills, may be missing or only partially addressed. Two large-scale assessments are currently being piloted by UNICEF (see Box 10).

To operationalise Teaching and Learning approaches through multiple pathways, several potential entry points exist for UNICEF programme action to engage governments and other stakeholders (see Table 2).

### Box 10: Regional large-scale assessments: Towards shared approaches

**SEA-PLM:** Designed specifically for the Southeast Asia region, the Southeast Asia Primary Learning Metrics (SEA-PLM) will work to improve and redefine learning outcomes to create a more equitable and meaningful education experience for all children across the region. Its regional metrics refer to curricula of all countries in the region, are respectful of Southeast Asian values and context, and include 21st century skills. SEA-PLM measures learning outcomes for Grade 5 students, focusing on reading, writing, mathematics and global citizenship, and includes background questionnaires for students, parents, teachers and schools. SEA-PLM is the result of a partnership between the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization, UNICEF and the Australian Council for Educational Research (<http://www.seaplsm.org/seaplsm/>).

**Measurement tools development in MENA:** UNICEF and the World Bank have joined efforts in the MENA region (<http://www.lsce-mena.org/>) to pioneer contextually appropriate tools to measure and evaluate Grade 7 (or age 12–14) student proficiency in four life skill dimensions defined through the Life Skills and Citizenship Education (LSCE) initiative, focusing on

- learning: creativity and problem solving
- employability: negotiation and decision-making
- personal empowerment: communication and self-management
- active citizenship: empathy, respect for diversity and participation

The tool measures age-related skills proficiency regardless of subject content, so is not based on national curricula. Results of skills levels across target populations will be shared with national ministries of education to allow them to track progress and design policies and programmes to enhance life skills. Plans are being made to apply the tool to other grade levels and ages. A field trial in partnership with the ministries of education in Egypt, Tunisia and the State of Palestine will provide invaluable feedback to refine this tool and expand its use.

**Table 2** Entry points in the area of Teaching and Learning**Support the development and implementation of:**

- curriculum and content for all education levels, including ECE, TVET, non-formal education, and other programmes described through the multiple pathways approach;
- pre-service and in-service professional development programmes that develop active pedagogical practices of teachers/facilitators/trainers;
- assessment tools and approaches including formative and summative skills learning outcomes

**Programme Action in the Area of Enabling Environments**

Skills development does not just happen in the classroom. The social and emotional nature of the skills makes it imperative that they be reinforced through positive interactions with adults and other peers within a child or adolescent's life. This is why enabling environments where girls and boys can participate and feel physically, socially and emotionally safe, are essential to promote effective skills development. Enabling environments can be fostered through:

***Governance and accountability mechanisms in schools and community engagement***

This includes the **participation of mothers, fathers, children and adolescents at all levels of school-based management**. Educators, school leadership, staff, teachers and communities have to be committed, prepared, trained and supported to develop learning environments that are conducive to quality learning based on respect, inclusivity, and in support of diversity.

Furthermore, mobilizing and involving parents/guardians, communities, girls, boys, adolescents and youth is essential to create and sustain a conducive environment for learning and skills development.<sup>121</sup>

**Communication for Development (C4D) strategies can foster communication with care-givers, children and adolescents, support safe and inclusive learning environments, and foster gender equality.**<sup>122</sup>

***Teacher wellbeing***

For teachers and instructors to acquire and apply the skills they are facilitating in learners, their wellbeing also plays a key role, especially under the stress of emergency and humanitarian settings.<sup>123</sup> Teacher wellbeing is correlated with helping students develop core social-emotional skills.<sup>124</sup> In fact, teachers who have trouble with their own social-emotional management in the classroom have a negative impact on student learning outcomes, especially for the most vulnerable students.<sup>125</sup> As a result, teacher professional development that promotes skills development should be considered when programming in crisis-affected contexts. A landscape review conducted by INEE<sup>126</sup> identifies factors that contribute to teacher well-being.

***Positive, safe, non-violent and inclusive learning environment***

The daily settings where learners actively practice skills, values and knowledge must be **positive, safe, non-violent and inclusive**; in other words, they must be enabling learning environments where parents/guardians can also be engaged in the skills development process. These learning environments can be formal school settings and non-formal settings, including homes, community centres, training centres, refugee camps, and other learning spaces. Increasingly, learning environments are digital. In digital learning environments, children's data must be protected and norms around digital relationships (between teachers and learners and between learners) should be established to prevent exploitation, addiction, bullying or harassment.<sup>127 128</sup>

### Positive discipline

A key way to create an enabling environment and improve classroom culture is to **emphasize positive discipline**. Positive discipline is a method of teaching appropriate behaviour by interacting with children in a kind but firm manner<sup>129</sup> and should replace corporal punishment and other forms of humiliation that leave children and youth anxious and fearful and prevent them from reaching their full potential in the classroom.<sup>130</sup> Because positive discipline calls for safety and equity for all learners and fosters a sense of trust and agency, it is critical to skills development, especially the foundational principle of human rights values.

### Access to mental health/psycho-social support (MHPSS)

Another aspect of creating enabling learning environments and skills development for children and

adolescents is **access to mental health/psycho-social support (MHPSS)** services in development and humanitarian settings. MHPSS is structured to promote the personal wellbeing of children and adolescents and address their individual needs based on situation and context.<sup>131</sup> MHPSS can be provided over the course of several years in schools, community centres and meeting places, particularly through **child protection programming**. Further multi-layered supports can also be made available to children and adolescent boys and girls and their families, all contributing to the creation of an enabling environment.

UNICEF is involved in various interventions to strengthen enabling environments (see Box 11).

To operationalise enabling environment approaches through multiple pathways, several potential entry points exist for UNICEF programme action to engage governments and other stakeholders (see Table 3).

### Box 11: Strengthening enabling environments

In Brazil, UNICEF provided technical assistance to the government to develop a National School Environment Policy. To reduce violence in schools, the policy promotes an inclusive learning environment to improve children's learning outcomes, positive education experiences and life skills.

In Jordan, UNICEF supported life skills development for over 56,000 children and adolescents using an integrated approach, including psychosocial support, health and nutrition services and WASH. The skills development took place in 234 Makani centres, spaces providing learning and skills opportunities under one roof. 72 of these Makani centres were located in Syrian refugee camps and informal tented settlements.

**Table 3** Entry points in the area of Enabling Environment**Support the development and implementation of:**

- good governance and accountability mechanisms in schools, including community engagement and parent and child participation in school-based management; this can include developing training programmes for schools and communities in M&E and creating enabling environments for skills interventions;
- components within C4D strategies and frameworks that address skills;
- teacher wellbeing measures that include professional development programmes to build the transferable skills of teachers and facilitators;
- safe and supportive physical and digital school and learning environments and programming that foster student relationships, communication, conflict resolution and self-protection;
- positive discipline policies, strategies and programmes which fully prohibit corporal punishment and other forms of violence;
- psychosocial support mechanisms to support children and youth in humanitarian settings and teacher training in early identification and referral of children and youth requiring specialized MHPSS services.

**Programme Action in the Area of Systems Strengthening**

To achieve scale and sustainability, skills development must be addressed **through education and learning systems** and throughout multiple pathways, hence the importance of action across different sectors. This Framework advocates for the establishment of integrated and collaborative national platforms for skills development through multiple pathways and partnerships across ministries (education, health, labour, youth, environment), civil society organizations, and the private sector.

Systems strengthening takes place mainly within national systems, facilitating dialogue between ministries of education and relevant stakeholders to maximize opportunities for innovation and outreach using a multiple pathways approach. Such an approach allows for a variety of interventions in non-formal and community education to be integrated into a coherent system. This coordination and collaboration reinforces existing sector-wide and multi-sectoral approaches designed to ensure harmonization, alignment and accountability.<sup>132</sup>

Systems strengthening by embedding skills within national systems requires coordinated programme intervention in the following areas:

***National policies, strategies, and plans***

Strengthening national policies, strategies and plans involves either **adopting specific standalone policies on skills development or explicitly integrating skills development into existing policies, strategies and plans in education and other sectors**, all with an emphasis on holistic skills development throughout education sector analysis and planning exercises.

Given the existing gender disparities in subject choice and career pathways, a strong focus on gender equitable skills development and pathways to employment should be embedded in national plans and policies.<sup>133</sup>

**National consultations** are key to ensure the participation in the development of a shared vision of quality learning and skills development. National consultations represent a high-level platform to facilitate the exchange of experiences and dialogue between representatives

of different departments within ministries of education, representatives from other ministries (labour, youth, women and social affairs), representatives from United Nations and other multilateral agencies, bilateral donors, civil society, and the private sector.

### ***Coordination and multi-stakeholder partnership frameworks***

Ministries of education play a central role in the scale and sustainability of skills development.

**Coordination and multi-stakeholder partnership frameworks between ministries of education and other ministries, NGOs, and the private sector have a number of benefits in implementation, funding, and research.** These frameworks can ensure coherent approaches and efficient use of human and financial resources,<sup>134</sup> create agreed-upon systems of assessment, certification and accreditation to support compatible learning pathways along the life-long learning continuum, and coordinate and designate the roles, responsibilities and accountability mechanisms of each stakeholders to deliver skills programming<sup>135 136 137</sup> (See Box 12, on The role of the private sector).

### ***Budgeting***

**Teacher training, training fees, school management training, teaching and learning resource development, and assessment tools, development represent the bulk of skills programming budgets**, all with recurrent funding implications. Expansion of one type of education, such as TVET, can be costly and have unintended impacts on other efforts, such as improving access and quality of basic education. Budgetary decisions should favour the poor, be gender responsive and reduce inequality.

### ***Human resources***

**Developing and implementing policies that ensure high-quality well-trained and high performing human resources is key to scaling and sustaining effective skills development programming.** Explicit reference to skills development should therefore be present in **selection criteria, job descriptions, professional development, performance evaluations and promotion policies** of the following key players with critical responsibilities:

### **Box 12: The role of the private sector**

The private sector can bring in a unique voice, capabilities, resources, and innovations to work with governments, communities, and young people to influence policy and develop programming that is impactful, scalable, sustainable, and that responds to the present and future needs of the labour market. Private sector participation in the development of national skills policy, qualifications frameworks and programmes can ensure that systems adequately prepare adolescents for employment or entrepreneurship as demanded by the labour market, including the development of transferable, job-specific and digital skills. Private sector can directly engage with education and training programmes to deliver skills development opportunities through on the job training, apprenticeships, mentorship or through directly supporting training opportunities monetarily.

With 60% of the global workforce in the informal sector,<sup>138</sup> which is further growing, it is also important to support informal employers in skills development through actions that include extending skill certification for informal sector training and apprenticeships and forming partnership between employment services and informal employers. Large businesses can also collaborate with small and medium enterprises to support them financially and technically in upskilling informal young workers with the skills that will allow them to be productive and potentially transition into more decent employment.

- teachers/facilitators/trainers, who deliver the programming, provide feedback to the learners and model the skills they are facilitating;
- head-teachers/supervisors/master-trainers, who develop, guide, and support teachers and facilitators as they implement teaching and learning practices;
- school counsellors, who support skills development through targeted interventions such as psychosocial support;
- principals, who foster a safe, inclusive, and engaged school environment that facilitates skills development inside and outside of the classroom;
- curricula, pedagogy, and assessment developers and experts, who design frameworks and materials that provide coherent and evidence-based approaches to skills development.

### *Monitoring and evaluation (M&E)*

Within the area of systems strengthening, M&E applies to two levels of indicators. The first are outcome indicators for life-long learning, employability

and entrepreneurship, personal empowerment, and active citizenship, which will be referred to as 'developmental outcome indicators.' The second type of indicators are output indicators and track progress in embedding skills development in education and learning systems through multiple pathways and will be referred to as 'output indicators.'

The outcome and output indicators UNICEF is currently using within the context of the Strategic Plan 2018–2021 are in Annex 3.

In pushing the agenda of skills development forward, policy makers, governments, donors and members of academia should further research and develop cost-effective instruments, approaches, and indicators that are able to capture both outputs and outcomes more accurately in less easily defined skills such as empowerment.

To operationalise systems strengthening approaches through multiple pathways, several potential entry points exist for UNICEF programme action to engage governments and other stakeholders (see Table 4).

**Table 4** Entry points in the areas of Systems Strengthening

Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• embedding skills components in upstream work such as education sector analysis and planning as well as policy and strategy development; this could include supporting national consultation processes and mapping exercises;</li><li>• embedding skills development activities within budgeting processes;</li><li>• developing and implementing effective coordination and partnerships between government, donors, civil society and the private sector;</li><li>• embedding skills components within human resource strategies, frameworks, and standards;</li><li>• developing and strengthening skills assessment frameworks for skills delivery systems and skills development outcomes, outputs and impacts</li></ul>

# Conclusion

UNICEF is engaging with governments and other stakeholders to advance in the rapidly evolving area of transferable skills development. Realizing the vision set forth in this Framework will require resources, partnership and coordination, and continuous learning based on data and evidence. Strong commitment, leadership and engagement of local stakeholders and national governments are of paramount importance.

UNICEF is continually striving towards advocating for the principles advocated by this Framework which ensure that all learners have an equitable chance for success in school, life and work.

To ensure quality, sustainability and impact, relevant ministries (education, youth, social affairs, labour), civil society (national and international NGOs), the private sector, academia, donors and multilateral and bi-lateral agencies should continue to systematically coordinate, collaborate and adjust trajectories based on goals and lessons learned.

Finally, we must continue to invest in building the evidence base for effective skills development approaches and innovations throughout the life course and especially in low-resource and low-capacity settings.



# Annex 1: Case Studies

The following case studies illustrate the support of UNICEF and others towards the systemic development of transferable skills at scale through multiple pathways for different types of learners by engaging in the areas of Teaching and Learning, Enabling Environments and Systems Strengthening.

## Life skills and peacebuilding education curriculum reform in South Sudan supported by UNICEF

### **(Teaching and Learning, Enabling Environments and Systems Strengthening)**

In 2012, under Learning for Peace, UNICEF identified life skills and peacebuilding education as an entry point to address some of the persistent root causes of conflict in South Sudan. The aim of curriculum revision was to mainstream life skills and peacebuilding education (LS+PBE), focusing on conflict sensitivity, peacebuilding and ‘fit-for-context’ life skills in the national syllabus at primary and secondary school levels.

After developing the LS+PBE curriculum guidelines, the following learning competencies were identified: intrapersonal/self-awareness skills; interpersonal/social skills; cognitive/coping skills; and stress/psychosocial coping skills. Under the thematic content of peacebuilding, the identified competencies were conflict resolution, negotiation, reconciliation and capacity-building.

UNICEF and partners provided training for teachers and education personnel (24 per cent female) at the national, state and county levels on participatory pedagogy to deliver life skills and peacebuilding education to children and young people.

Seven subjects at the elementary level and five subjects at the secondary level integrated the LS+PBE content. The Sudan Ministry of General Education set aside two hours per week in the national school timetable to address crucial co-curricular components of the LS+PBE guidelines. A UNICEF study in 2014 found positive behavioural change outcomes as a result of the programme.

## Vietnam Escuela Nueva (VNEN) supported by GPE

### **(Teaching and Learning, Enabling Environments and Systems Strengthening)**

VNEN, inspired by its namesake and an internationally recognized education model in Colombia, sought the implementation of a ‘whole school’ approach in 1,447 schools in Vietnam from 2012–16. The programme incorporates and integrates several innovative and globally recognized practices, including participative and collaborative learning; self-paced learning guides; student government; combined formative and summative assessment; application or real-life oriented learning with community integration; and teacher professional networks.

VNEN students were exposed to multiple pathways of learning, spending significant time in group activities as opposed to whole class work. In addition, VNEN schools provided much more space for students to develop and practice 21st century skills such as leadership, teamwork and cooperative learning, communication and self-managed learning. The majority of the interactions involving 21st century skills were at the intermediate and advanced levels. Every VNEN class had a student government. VNEN teachers received training support from the Ministry of Education in using the learning guide with a certain level of flexibility while still meeting quality standards and teaching all of the required content.

The programme was evaluated by the World Bank, which found a positive impact on the socio-emotional skills and academic performance of children enrolled in VNEN schools as compared to non-VNEN schools. The programme benefited about half million children over four years.

## Escuelas Amigas in Peru

### **(Teaching and Learning and Systems Strengthening)**

The Escuelas Amigas programme was started by the Peru Ministry of Education in secondary schools in 2014,

which implemented a curriculum of skills for well-being. The 15-month curriculum, known as the Paso a Paso or Step by Step Curriculum, has ten areas of focus: full-attention; self-knowledge; management of emotions and stress; empathy; sports; mental and emotional strength; critical thinking; decision-making; effective communication and creative thinking. Master trainers with a background in psychology or education received training from University of Pennsylvania psychologists. These master trainers then trained staff members from the Peru Ministry of Education to be local trainers.

The programme was rigorously implemented using a randomized design. The World Bank collected pre-intervention baseline data and post-intervention data. Longitudinal school-level analyses of survey data show that the Paso a Paso Curriculum significantly increased adolescent well-being as well as academic performance in participating schools.

### UPSHIFT supported by UNICEF **(Teaching and Learning and Systems Strengthening)**

UPSHIFT is a youth social innovation programme that empowers marginalised young people to identify and design solutions to community challenges. Through this process, they gain employment and life skills. UPSHIFT delivers transferable 21st century skills, builds confidence and resilience, and brings communities together, creating a double dividend.

The UPSHIFT approach combines social innovation workshops with mentorship and seed funding and is tailored to reach the most marginalised youth. More than 12 countries are currently implementing UPSHIFT. In Kosovo, this includes ethnic minority communities; in Vietnam, the focus is on young people with disabilities; and in Jordan and Lebanon, the focus is on young refugees and their often also marginalised host communities.

UPSHIFT has been recognized as a promising solution in the World Bank Solutions for Youth Employment impact portfolio, with several observable positive impacts of the

programme. In Kosovo, 28 CSOs have been formed and 20 businesses have been registered by the programme beneficiaries. In the same country, a prototype for an app, 'Shnet,' was designed through UPSHIFT in 2016 to inform Kosovo youth about sex education and reproductive health. 'Shnet' was then re-designed for national scale and launched in 2018.

### Nashatati: Life skills, social cohesion and after-school activities programme in Jordan

#### **(Teaching and Learning, Enabling Environments and Systems Strengthening)**

Jordan has been working on meeting SDG4 to provide all children in the country with equal quality learning opportunities. Despite challenges such as the large influx of Syrian refugees, the Jordanian Ministry of Education has made significant efforts to increase equal access to pre-primary, primary and secondary education for all children in Jordan regardless of nationality or status. The Jordan Education Strategic Plan 2018-2021 was launched to collectively leverage resources to strengthen the education system through a student-centred approach.

The Nashatati (My Activities) programme builds on the Life Skills and Citizenship Education initiative to promote school participation and develop life skills and social cohesion through co-curricular sport-based activities at school, all with the goal of reducing violence in schools. It is estimated that 15 per cent of children stay out of school at least one day per year for fear of being bullied or physically attacked, and 70 per cent of Syrian students in Jordan are reportedly bullied in public schools.

Nashatati was piloted in 100 public schools that were selected using criteria that included vulnerability of students, availability of safe outdoor space to accommodate activities, occurrences of violence, and lack of existing co-curricular interventions. Nashatati targets all vulnerable school-age children aged 6 to 16 across all 12 governorates of Jordan with creative learning activities such as sports and games that develop life skills and foster social cohesion, healthy living and personal development.

In the school year 2017-2018, the programme reached 10,000 female and male students. The preliminary results show positive impact on student confidence, communication skills, problem-solving skills and sense of belonging. The programme is expected be gradually scaled up to include all schools in Jordan.



# Annex 2: Key Documents

## Strategies, frameworks, and policy recommendations

1. [\*Future Competences and the Future of Curriculum: A Global Reference for Curricula Transformation, IBE-UNESCO\*](#) offers a global guide for competence-based curricula that can support the attainment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and prepare learners (young and old) for Industry 4.0. It presents a framework of competences to serve as a global reference point for future curricula transformations and articulates future competences and the future of curriculum, proposing an institutional mechanism to keep competences current.
2. [\*Reimagining Life Skills and Citizenship Education in the Middle East and North Africa: A Four-Dimensional and Systems Approach to 21st Century Skills, UNICEF\*](#) is a Conceptual and Programmatic Framework on life skills and citizenship education that guides countries in planning and implementation through strategy development, programming and the organization of technical support.
3. [\*How Education Systems Approach Breadth of Skills, Brookings Institution, 2016\*](#) seeks to identify how a new generation of skills can best be developed and enhanced in young children and students so they can navigate education and work in the face of changing social, technological, and economic demands. The focus is breadth of skills, breadth across ages, and breadth of learning opportunities both inside and out of school.
2. [\*Education System Alignment for 21st Century Skills: Focus on Assessment, Brookings Institution, 2018\*](#) seeks to demonstrate the challenges in embedding skills development in education systems and aligning curricula, pedagogy, and assessment. This document identifies possible assessment approaches, using examples to highlight effective strategies for skills assessment while acknowledging the technical difficulties associated with 'capturing' behaviours for scoring and reporting purposes.
3. [\*Busy Going Nowhere: Curriculum Reform in Eastern and Southern Africa, UNICEF\*](#) is a think piece challenging the current approach to curriculum reform and drawing evidence from a number of ESA countries. Its central tenet is that curriculum reform should never exceed the delivery capacity of the education system. A new curriculum alone, without changes across other elements of the delivery system, will not transform learning.
4. [\*Use of Data from 21st Century Skills Assessments: Issues and Key Principles, Brookings Institution, 2018\*](#) provides guidance on using and interpreting data from 21st century skills assessment in terms of learning outcomes to inform teaching and learning. It includes applicable and relevant actionable recommendations for assessing current 21st century skills to enhance learning outcomes and also looks anticipates the future of assessment.
5. [\*Navigating SEL from the Inside Out: Looking inside & across 25 leading SEL Programs, Harvard Graduate School of Education, 2017\*](#) is a practical resource for schools and OST providers (elementary school focus) about the specific features that define SEL programmes that may be important to stakeholders selecting, recommending, evaluating, or reporting on SEL programmes or to those who are aligning efforts across multiple schools, programmes, or regions.
6. [\*What is the Same and What is Different? Making sense of the “non-cognitive” domain: Helping educators translate research into practice, Harvard\*](#)

Graduate School of Education, 2016, is a ‘taxonomy project’ from the process of creating a nomological network designed to organize, describe, and connect the different frameworks and terms used to describe non-cognitive skills across a variety of disciplines. The project seeks to build clarity in this field in order to foster and maintain fundamental and essential links between research and practice.

7. Integrated Youth Employment Programs: A stocktake of evidence on what works in youth employment programs, World Bank, 2018, summarizes the evidence of what works in youth employment programmes on both the supply and demand side, including the skills programming contribution to improving employment outcomes.

## Tools and guides

1. Integration: A New Approach to Youth Employment Programs, World Bank, 2018, provides guidance to project managers and project teams on the design and implementation of integrated, cross-sectoral youth employment programmes. The aim of these integrated programmes is to bring together supply and demand side interventions to simultaneously address challenges of job creation and job quality and to help prepare young people to find or move to better jobs.
2. UNICEF Evaluation of Innovation, UNICEF, 2018, explains the Adolescent Kit for Expression and Innovation (Adolescent Kit), a package of technical guidance, tools, activities and physical supplies intended to develop adolescent capacity specifically in individuals affected by conflict, poverty, and other humanitarian crises. An overview of the innovative process used in the Adolescent Kit helps explain how innovators can successfully adopt human centred design approaches and develop programmes that can be used globally. context.
3. Key Features of High-Quality Policies and Guidelines to Support Social and Emotional Learning, American Institutes for Research, 2017, provides an overview of six key features of a high-quality, comprehensive package of policies and guidance to support student social and emotional learning. The six key features represent policies and guidance that are comprehensive and robust, culturally and linguistically sensitive, developmentally appropriate, and connected to positive learning environments and professional development.
4. A Process for Developing and Articulating Learning Goals or Competencies for Social and Emotional Learning, American Institutes for Research, 2017, provides detailed information about the process for developing and articulating learning goals or competencies.
5. Positive Youth Development Measurement Toolkit, USAID, provides implementers of youth programming with a variety of references, resources, and tools for using a positive youth development (PYD) approach to evaluate youth-focused programming. A PYD evaluation approach measures whether youth are positively engaged in and benefiting from investments that ultimately empower them to develop in healthy and positive ways so that they can in turn contribute to the development of their communities.
6. Measuring Soft Skills & Life Skills in International Youth Development Programs, USAID, 2017, explains the results of a USAID Youth Power Action project that undertook a review of soft skill measurement tools and created an inventory describing soft skill characteristics. This publication can be used by international youth development programmes to assess participants’ soft skills. This report describes general as well as specific findings about the tools that measure a select set of key soft skills and suggests recommendations for improvement.

7. [\*Developing Social-Emotional Skills for the Labour Market\*, World Bank, 2014](#), provides a coherent framework and related policies and programmes that bridge psychology, economics, and education literature specifically related to the skills that employers value that predict positive labour market outcomes. It maps the age and context in which each skill subset is developed and uses examples of successful interventions to illustrate the pedagogical process.
8. [\*Best Practices in Social-Emotional Learning\*, prepared for the Washington Association of School Administrators \(WASA\), Hanover Research, 2017](#), describes organizational best practices and classroom strategies to promote SEL learning across all grades and student groups, including planning, professional development, staffing, resources and evaluation.
9. [\*Strengthening Life Skills for Youth: A practical guide to quality programming\*, Global Partnership for Youth Employment/International Youth Foundation, 2014](#) is a practical tool to help donors and youth serving organizations enhance the design, planning, implementation, and evaluation of life skills programming and training based on a set of nine Life Skills Standards of Excellence.
10. [\*Teaching the Whole Child: Instructional practices that support social-emotional learning in three teacher evaluation frameworks\*, American Institutes for Research, 2014](#), is a Research-to-Practice Brief that identifies teaching practices that promote student SEL which is critical for student academic learning. It showcases three popular professional teaching frameworks that embed practices that influence not only social and emotional competencies but academic learning.



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# Annex 3: UNICEF-Specific Guidance

The target audience of this guidance is UNICEF education staff and other staff whose work involves skills development components as elaborated in the preamble of the Framework.

The Global Framework on Transferable Skills supports UNICEF country offices, policymakers, programmers, and educators **in the systematic development of a breadth of transferable skills, at scale, across the life course and through multiple learning pathways—formal, non-formal and community-based.**

This guidance articulates the Strategic Plan 2018-2021 results on skills; further articulates UNICEF specific strategies to operationalise the Global Framework on Transferable Skills; and is consistent with the vision of skills and learning provided within the context of the 'Every Child Learns' UNICEF Education Strategy (2019-2030).

This guidance provides principles and an approach to inform the skills development programming; it does not provide specific advice on delivering outcomes across thematic areas. Our ambition is to share resources developed by others through this Framework and the knowledge management platform and to continue to develop aspects of this guidance document based on country office needs.

## Skills in UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018–2021

Under the UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021, **Goal 2 'Every Child Learns' is comprised of three inter-related results areas: access, learning, and skills.**

Skills development is contingent on access to education and training as well as learning, so results areas are best seen as mutually supportive across all age ranges rather than sequential.

In line with the SDG, the results areas span early childhood education to the upper secondary level with a focus on the many adolescents who drop out before completing secondary education. Each results area has underpinning strategies that include system

strengthening, service delivery, global partnerships and public goods.

Specifically, under Goal 2, Result 3 (Skills), UNICEF aims to contribute to a reduction in the percentage of adolescents in not in employment, education or training (NEET) from 22 per cent to 20 per cent through:

- **direct service delivery** with a target of enabling 12.5 million children and adolescents to develop skills for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and employability;
- **systems strengthening** by contributing to 10 per cent of countries institutionalizing the above skills within education and training systems.

Guidance for measurement, source, and target setting for service delivery and systems strengthening indicators can be found in the RAM Guidance Document.

Skills development also contributes to the achievement of outcomes across all five goal areas (see Figure 11).

## Delivering on results

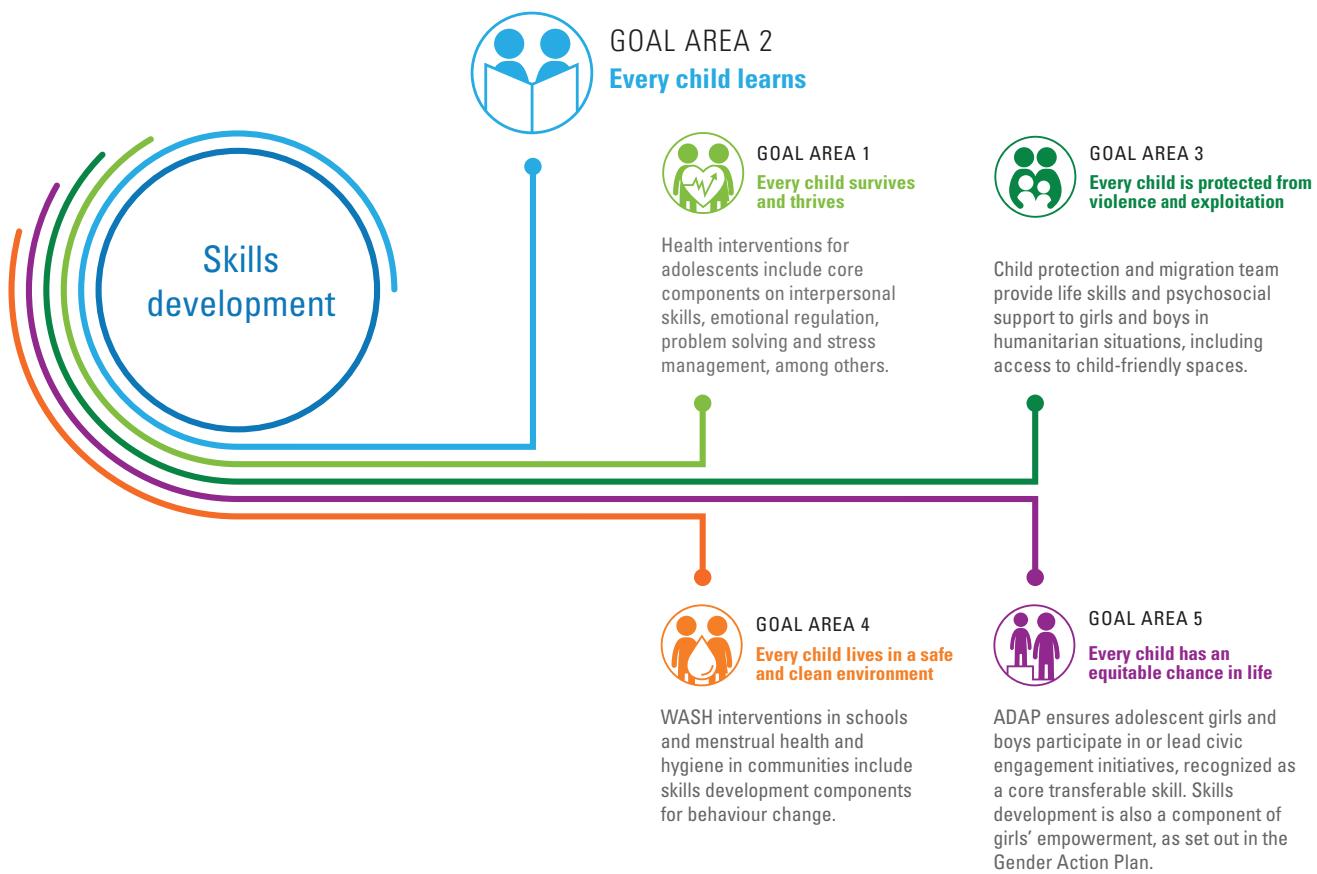
In order to deliver on the results of UNICEF's Strategic Plan and Education Strategy, foundational, transferable, and digital skills need to be embedded in education systems from early childhood onwards. To further improve the relevance and responsiveness of secondary education to the demands of the labour market, job-specific skills need to also be embedded in those systems.

To deliver on these results, this Framework proposes several potential entry points for action which can be engaged in separately and in combination with others to incrementally achieve the scale, sustainability and long-term change within education and learning systems and other delivery systems where skills development is relevant.

UNICEF will address the key barriers that prevent young

**Figure 11** Skills development in UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021

Skills is a result under UNICEF SP Goal 2 (Every child learns), skills development contributes to the achievement of outcomes across all five of the Goal areas:



### Box 13: UNICEF-comparative advantage for skills development

- Focus on equity: UNICEF has an equity focus that informs the targeting of interventions and the need to address the specific barriers affecting marginalized groups.
- Presence on the ground: Among other development partners, UNICEF is poised with strong presence on the ground that allows for continuous and effective implementation and engagement with relevant stakeholders.
- Life-cycle approach: UNICEF's mandate spans the whole life-cycle of children and adolescents and can ensure coherence and continuity in programming.
- Leveraging partnerships: UNICEF can play a convening and leadership role within the larger national agendas of skills development and bring together the MOEs and other ministries as well as UN agencies, NGOs and the private sector need to be brought together.
- Multi- and cross-sectoral engagement: Advancing common messages and a shared learning agenda for adolescents represents a key comparative advantage of UNICEF to be invested at national level when designing interventions for children and youth.
- Humanitarian-Development Continuum: UNICEF works across the humanitarian-development continuum which allows it to tailor and adapt its programming and adapt as contexts change.

people from developing skills relevant for live and work through the following priority actions and in line with UNICEF's comparative advantage (see Box 13):

#### Embedding skills development in education systems

- **Systems strengthening:** Advocacy and technical assistance to ensure policies and plans for holistic skill development are developed with equitable allocation of resources, targets, and accountability mechanisms for different learning pathways and throughout the life course.
- **Curricula, teacher development, and assessment:** Technical support to in-service and pre-service teacher training to support holistic skills development in line with the curriculum. Teachers in non-formal education are trained and provided guidance materials to embed skills into programmes which are appropriate to different levels of education.

- **Enabling environment:** Community is engaged through delivery of skills development programmes, and whether employers (through apprenticeships, provision of training), adolescent youth groups, student councils can be more involved.

#### Responsiveness to the demands of the labour market

- **National skills development programmes:** Ensure secondary education adequately prepares adolescents for the workforce, including the development of transferable, job-specific and digital skills. Link the development of foundational and transferable skills to interventions aimed at improving technical skills of marginalised adolescents.

- **Non-formal skills training:** Provide demand driven and integrated package of services with an explicit and measured outcome of smoothing transition of school to work.

## Gender equity in opportunities for skills development

### National education/training policies and plans:

Improve gender parity in the secondary education teacher workforce including in vocational education and STEM subjects. Consider incentives for older out-of-school girls and boys to access non-formal education skills development which are gender-sensitive and promote gender equality.

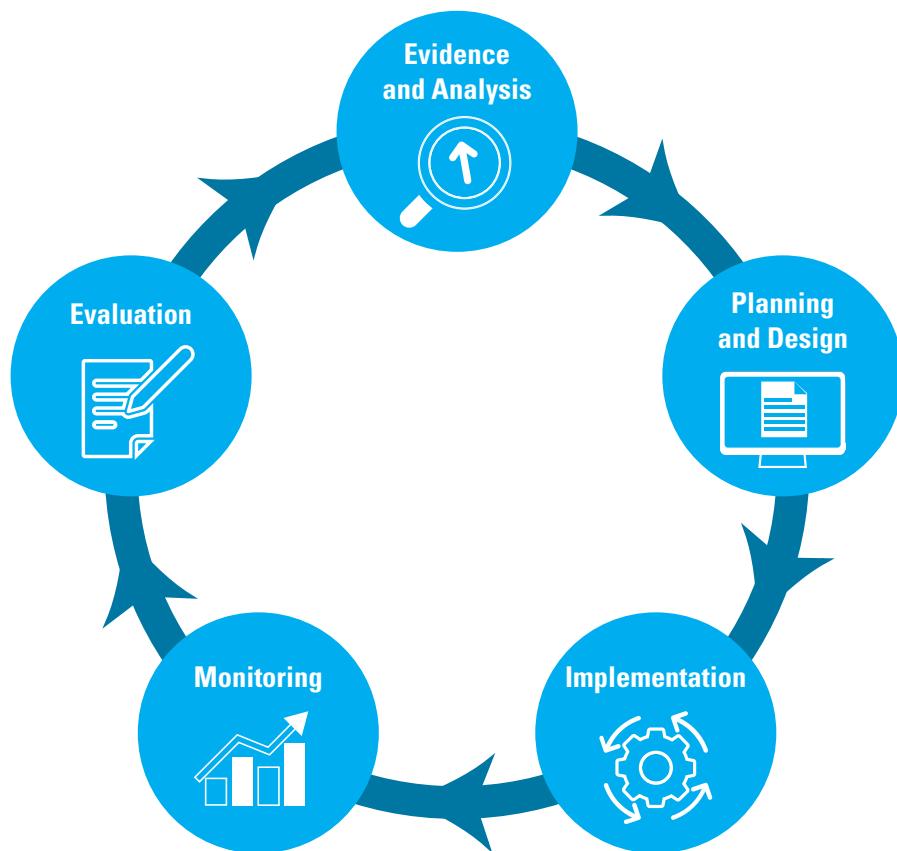
Operationally, UNICEF will continue to ground the design of every intervention in high-quality situation analyses and extensive engagement with government

and development partners. Applying Results Based Management (RBM) principles is critical to ensure a systematic and results-oriented approach to skills development.

A set of actions is proposed for planners and programmers to consider as they engage in different stages of the programme cycle: evidence and analysis, strategic planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting and evaluation (see Figure 12).

While all stages of the cycle are crucial in delivering results, the first two are particularly important to establish a solid foundation.

**Figure 12** Five stages of the programme cycle



## Evidence and analysis

During this stage, planners and programmers should consider the following four actions to identify a target group and the results to be strengthened through engagement in skills development work:

### 1. Develop an understanding of the UNICEF approach to skills development:

- review resources available at UNICEF HQ [Skills Page on the Education Knowledge Domain](#) such as The Global Framework on Transferable Skills, guidance documents, webinars and regional and country specific documents;
- conduct a multi-sectoral skill share to exchange approaches and platforms across sectors working on skills development; a sample agenda/meeting invitation can be found on the [Skills Page on the Education Knowledge Domain](#);
- engage colleagues through the [Skills Yammer group](#) to deepen an understanding of work-related skills.

### 2. Identify country office results that can be strengthened through skills development:

- identify CPD result(s) that can be strengthened through skills development programming; this may be to improve children's learning outcomes at the end of primary, reduce child marriage, or to improve the employment outcomes of school leavers; sources include CPD, Programme Strategy Notes, Mid-term Review and Strategic Moment of Reflection; If the country office is in the planning process, results can be explored research;
- ensure that the result area has a specific target group of children and adolescents to enable equity focused programming; if data is lacking, conduct research;
- identify initial teams/sectors and external partners, including youth (if applicable) and consultants, and assign clear roles and responsibilities.

### 3. Undertake research to understand the challenges and opportunities for selected target beneficiaries and chosen result, recognizing that challenges and opportunities will vary depending on the chosen result.

As an example, the barriers and bottlenecks to improved learning outcomes for in-school children will differ from those for out-of-school children, or for improving sexual and reproductive health, adolescent participation, or work outcomes for older adolescents.

Depending on the resources and time available, **understanding challenges and opportunities of a specific targeted group and the selected result can be achieved through both primary and secondary research**. Additionally, **key external stakeholders, including technical experts, government, other UN agencies, civil society, and the private sector, should be included in the planning and implementation of the subsequent analysis of the research**. Such an analysis exercise itself can provide an opportunity for engagement between different stakeholders around skills development.

Research questions to be included in a situation analysis or other analysis can be guided by a focus on developing further understanding regarding the target beneficiaries and chosen results around the following questions underpinned by the technical components of the Framework:

- **Stakeholders:** Who are the key stakeholders working to achieve this result and what are their comparative advantages and roles? Governments, civil society organizations, private sector, donors?
- **Skills Conceptualization:** How are skills defined, conceptualized, and prioritized related to this result?
- **Multiple Pathways:** What are the different pathways available to achieve the result? Formal education, Non-formal education, transition to work programmes, etc.?

- **Teaching and Learning:** What curricular, teaching, and assessment approaches have shown evidence towards these results?
- **Enabling Environment:** How can enabling environments be enhanced to improve results?
- **Systems:** What aspects of the system should be engaged in to ensure sustainability of intervention? What are the system challenges that should be considered?

The level of analysis can also be contextualized and further **analysed according to age, gender, schooling, and other socio-economic or marginalisation factors** that can have programming implications.

Several countries and regions have already been engaged in mapping skills development at the national level, and the Skills Teamsite provides sample TOR documents and analytical tools to conduct this analysis.

#### 4. Refine the selection of results and the target group by applying the following criteria:

- consider comparative advantage by looking at the strengths and weaknesses of partners and key actors, their interests, and their programmatic and geographic areas of action; mapping partners and stakeholders with an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) will help identify opportunities and strategic partnerships to decide where to intervene;
- consider the capacities and resources available to UNICEF to act, including financial and human resources, technological and organizational operational capacity, and structure;
- consider UNICEF track record for acting effectively in various contexts to address risks, along with the value for money and the efficiency of the proposed intervention;
- refine teams/sectors, external partners, youth if applicable, and consultants that will be involved in the next phases.



## Planning, design, and implementation

During these stages, and once the results and target group have been identified, planners and programmers will design and implement the intervention.

As the case studies in Annex 1 illustrate, country offices often combine many of the entry points outlined in the Global Framework on Transferable Skills to design an intervention that will strengthen results, regardless of whether the mandate is service delivery, systems strengthening or a hybrid approach.

Regardless of the intervention, the UNICEF role must be clarified based on a situation analysis as well as through coordination with partners, including UN partners, governments, and other stakeholders.

UNICEF HQ, regional and country levels have developed and continue developing guidance documents, webinars, technical briefs, blogs and evidence briefs to inform skills development work. Various external resources also exist that can inform the work. Considering the depth and breadth of resources, the UNICEF Knowledge Domain will serve as a repository of internal and external resources to assist the countries in their skills work.

In intervention design, it is important to review what works and what does not work in research results and evaluations. Because the evidence in effective skills development programmes is often weak or absent, country offices should design pilots with a view to scale and integrate programmes within government systems. To do this, it is necessary to build evidence generation and sustainability into the programme design.

Each intervention design will be translated into a **budgeted programme design document with a clear theory of change** that identifies quantifiable and well-articulated **inputs, strategies, outputs, outcomes, other stakeholders, and the methodology for measuring results**. The design should also identify **constraints, risks and mitigation strategies**.

## Monitoring and evaluation

During this stage, an M&E process should be implemented to regularly track activities and results at different levels (see Figure 13).

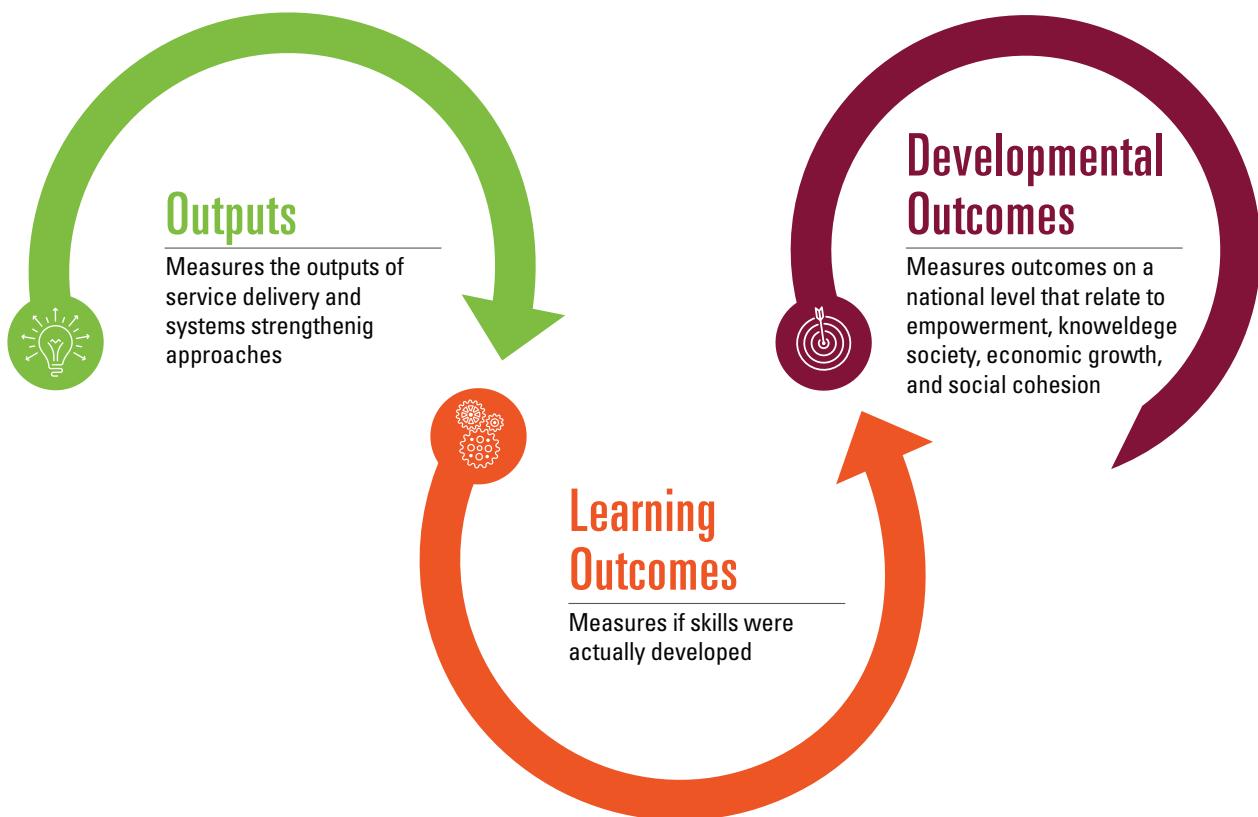
The RAM guidance for Goal 2 under area 3, 'skills', provides indicators and guidance for measuring developmental outcomes and intervention outputs. Country offices should consider other relevant RAM indicators under the areas of 'access' and 'learning' and/or use established national indicators. Country offices should also consider other outcome and output indicators relevant to skills development that exist within the RAM under different goals, especially in multi and cross-sectoral approaches.

When selecting the indicators, country offices should keep the relevance of indicators to national priorities in mind, particularly if they are linked to policy or emerging issues such as employment or social cohesion, which can compel interest and generate action. Country offices should also consider the availability of data for the selected indicator and the ease of its acquisition.

## Developmental outcomes

In a summary of the outcome indicators according to RAM, Goal 2, the left column shows indicators already identified under the 'skills' area, while the right column shows relevant RAM indicators from the 'access' and 'learning' areas that can be further considered by country offices measuring results on skills (see Table 5).

**Figure 13** Measuring results



**Table 5** Developmental outcome indicators

<b>RAM Developmental Outcome Indicators (skills)</b>	<b>Relevant RAM Developmental Outcome Indicators (access and learning)</b>
• share of government expenditures allocated for education	• completion rate (primary, lower secondary, and upper secondary)
• literacy rate of youth aged 15–24	
• percentage of youth/adults with ICT skills	
• percentage of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET)	
• employment rate of lower secondary education graduates	
• employment rate of secondary education graduates	
• employment rate of TVET graduates	
• enrolment rate of TVET per 100,000 inhabitants	
• percentage of TVET students studying science, mathematics and/or technology	

## Skills development outcomes

Measuring skills development outcomes related to transferable skills is discussed in the Framework in Chapter 2.

## Outputs

A summary of the output indicators according to RAM Goal 2 follows (see Table 6).

**Table 6** Output indicators

Ram Output Indicators (Skills)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Service delivery: (skills) schools have life skills and citizenship education included in their school plans with UNICEF support</li><li>• System Strengthening (skills): national curricula and training support the mainstreaming of skills development within the national system</li><li>• System Strengthening (skills): national education/training policies and plans support the mainstreaming of skills development within the national system</li><li>• System Strengthening (skills): community engagement supports the mainstreaming of skills development within the national system</li><li>• Service delivery (skills): number of children who have participated in skills development programmes for learning, personal empowerment, active citizenship and/or employability through UNICEF-supported programmes</li><li>• System Strengthening (skills): national skills development programmes are responsive to the demands of the labour market</li><li>• System strengthening (education sector planning): education sector analysis, financial simulation model or medium-term expenditure framework developed with UNICEF support</li><li>• System Strengthening (education sector planning): an education sector plan or a transitional education sector plan is developed with UNICEF support</li><li>• System Strengthening (education sector planning): national strategies to address inequities in education access, participation and retention exist</li><li>• System Strengthening (education sector planning): national strategies address inequities in education resource allocation</li><li>• System Strengthening (gender): national education sector plan/policies support gender-responsive teaching and learning</li><li>• System Strengthening (gender): national education/training policies and plans support the mainstreaming of gender equity in opportunities for skills development</li><li>• Service delivery (gender): schools have life skills and citizenship education included in their school plans with support from the UNICEF ECM programme</li><li>• Service delivery (emergency response): school-aged children targeted by UNICEF with access to psychosocial support in schools/learning spaces during and after a humanitarian situation</li></ul>

## Organizational priorities

To fulfil this vision and the delivery of results at country, regional and global levels, UNICEF should focus on two organizational priorities: capacity development and partnership development.

### Capacity development

UNICEF should develop the staff internal capacity to engage, coordinate, and collaborate effectively across different sectors and divisions in high quality programming through

- positioning skills development as an **integral component of all 'learning' interventions within education and non-education sectors** and reflect this understanding in programme planning, implementation, and evaluation at country level;
- engaging in targeted **capacity-building of key management and technical staff** in education and across other sectors to deepen the understanding of UNICEF approaches through summary briefings and communication tools;
- expanding the technical capacity of UNICEF programming to support governments with skills related work through **training and strategic recruitment of dedicated staff** to support and lead on skills development within education and other sectors; Long Term Agreements (LTAs) should be utilized and expanded to support UNICEF and partner capacity in skills related work;
- promoting **internal collaboration and learning** by sharing of best practices and resources of all types through the knowledge management platform.

### Partnership development

UNICEF should develop and expand partnerships and coordination with key external partners, including:

- **multilateral organizations (such as ILO, UNESCO, UNHCR, the World Bank) and key in-country donors (such as USAID and DIFD)** that can complement UNICEF technical expertise and advocate for unified and complimentary approaches with government partners;
- **implementing partners, including private sector and civil society** organizations to harmonize workstreams and approaches;
- **research partners such as UNESCO, ILO, the World Bank, universities, research centres and academics** to support an ambitious research agenda to develop evidence and best practices to confront challenges in the area of skills development programming in low-resource and low-capacity settings.

In-country, regional and global coalitions, partnerships, and initiatives also provide effective platforms for strategic engagement, coordination, and collaboration. When work plans are developed, however, regional and country offices should be mindful that such partnerships and coordination activities are often resource-intensive.

**Generation Unlimited** is such a partnership, where UNICEF engages in skills development at country, regional, and HQ levels (see Box 14).

### **Box 14: Generation Unlimited and UNICEF: Unlocking innovation in skills development**

Generation Unlimited brings young women and men together with the private sector, governments, international and local organizations to prepare them for success in school, work, and life. It connects secondary-age education and training to the complex and fast-changing world of work. It matches young people with job opportunities, fostering entrepreneurship and empowering a generation to fully engage with their societies as active citizens. These are all areas where skills development plays a pivotal role.

Generation Unlimited is developing partnerships to support bold investment agendas. It is building on local and national efforts and tailoring plans to meet the key priorities, needs and conditions of different countries. It is securing strong commitments from the highest levels of government, leveraging the full resources of businesses and putting young people at the heart of decision making.

Generation Unlimited provides UNICEF with opportunities to work with other partners to leverage both commitment and action from a broader range of partners on skills development in line with the Strategic Plan (2018–2021) and ‘Every Child Learns’ – UNICEF Education Strategy (2019–2030) for adolescents.

At the global level, UNICEF also has various partnerships across different levels of country and regional offices, including the World Bank-driven [Solutions for Youth Employment](#), the ILO-driven [Decent Jobs for Youth](#) initiative, and the WEF-driven Centre for the New Economy and Society, among many others.

## Endnotes

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